CYCLE GUIDE

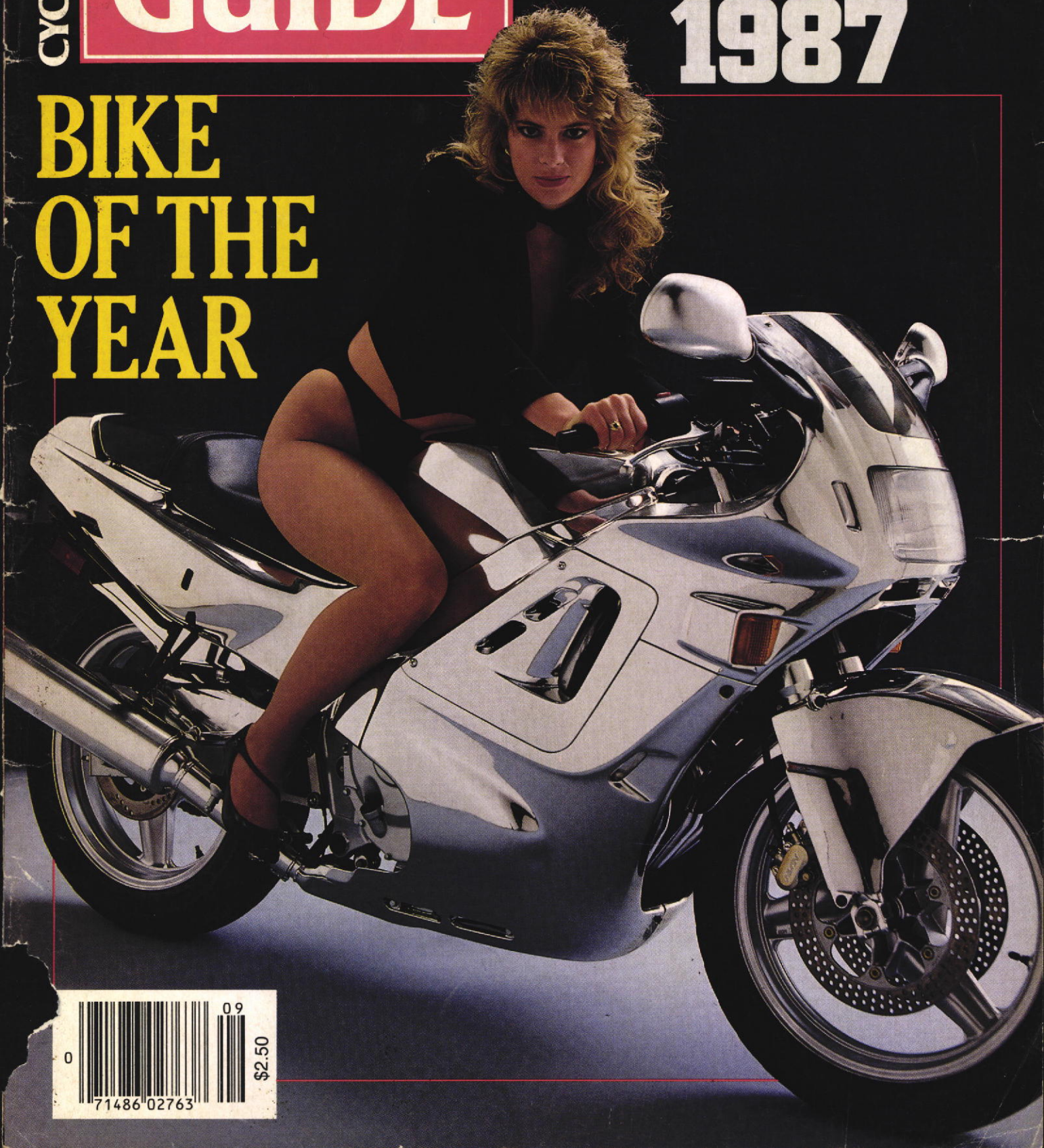
CYCLE GUIDE

02763

FALL
1987

THE BEST OF 1987

BIKE OF THE YEAR



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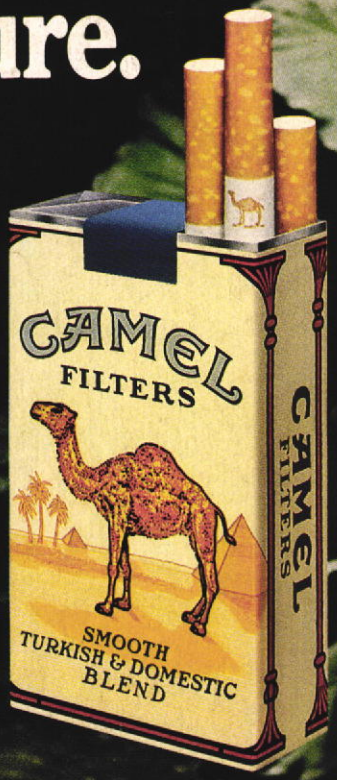

16 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

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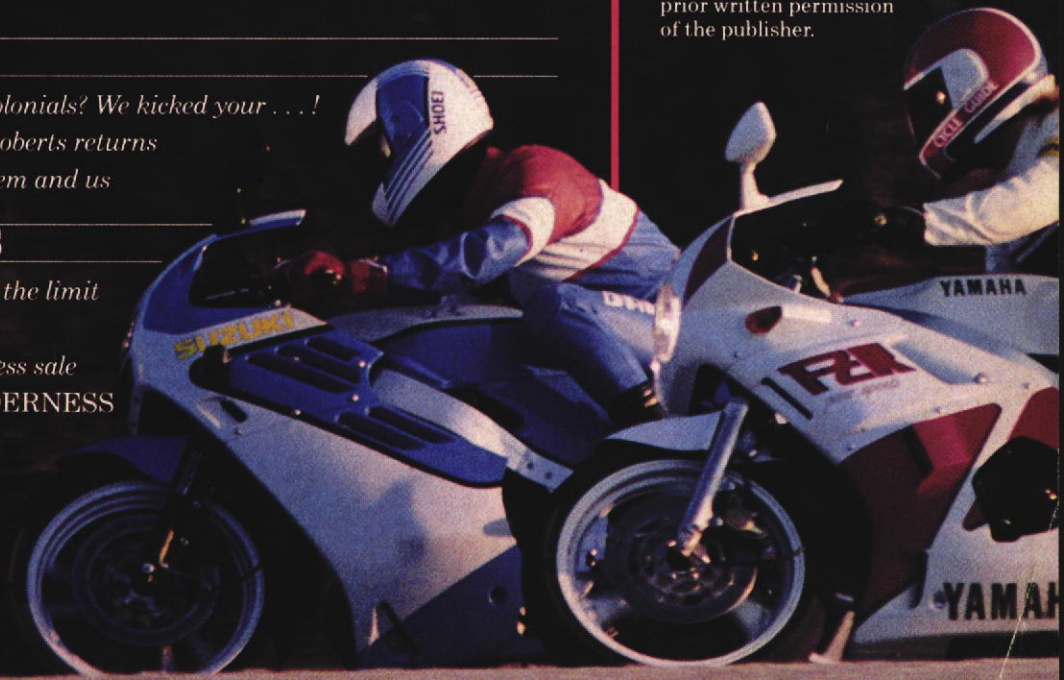
ON THE COVER: It's Honda's latest planned-obsolescence module, the 600 Hurricane. For some inexplicable reason we've chromed this otherwise rather handsome motorcycle, and draped a scantily clad model over it, for the sole purpose of adorning this issue. For further views of both, see page 16.



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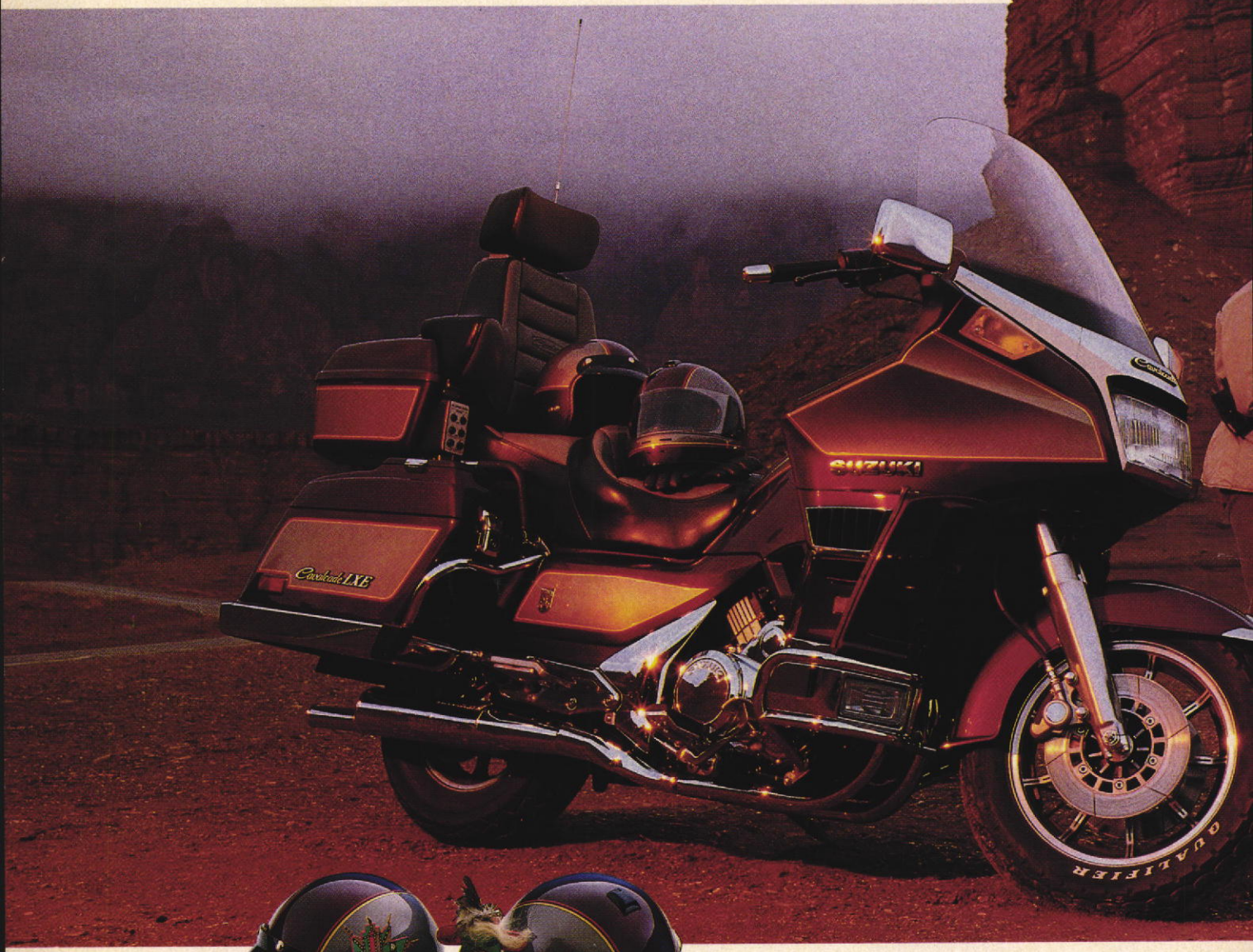
THE CAVALCADE LXE

One can ride for many moons.



Paul and Joannie took the curve at 55 miles per hour, as smooth as sweeping your hand across a fine mahogany finish. The huge rise up ahead was an anthill to the Cavalcade LXE.

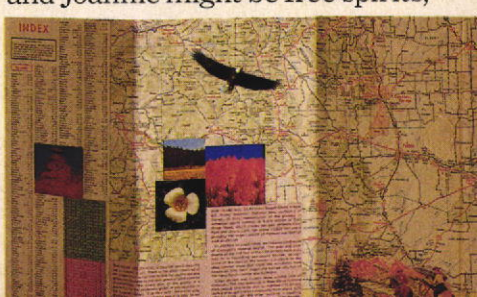
Paul accelerated and the V-Four answered with calm, hill-flattening power.

Joannie adjusted the sliding backrest and relaxed. Paul put in a tape of Beethoven's 5th.

It was wonderful how a motorcycle could draw out such interesting people.

It was a joy to meet them. To collect warm memories from out-of-the-way places. They had just come from a Navajo reservation. There they met an Indian chief who told them great tales about his forefathers.

Through his eyes, Paul and Joannie might be free spirits,



Play it safe. Ride with care. Always wear a helmet, eye protection, and appropriate riding apparel. Never drink and ride. Read your owner's manual carefully. Call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-447-4700 for a riding skills course near you.

WHILE YOU'RE AT AMERICADE '87, STOP BY THE SUZUKI TENT FOR A TEST RIDE ON A NEW CAVALCADE and receive a free Americade '87 commemorative pin, while supplies last!

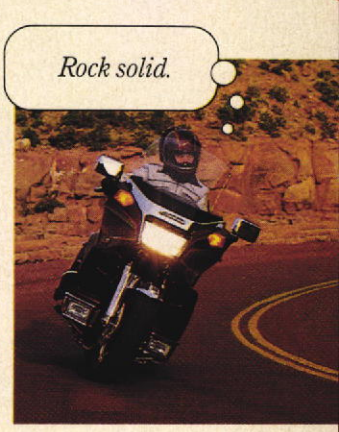
Points of Interest

1) 1360cc, DOHC, 16-valve, liquid cooled V-4 engine with maintenance-free hydraulic valve adjusters, plus 5-speed transmission
2) Custom-designed Clarion AM/FM stereo cassette player with auto reverse, automatic volume control, mute system, separate co-rider controls, intercom function and CB compatability (intercom and CB optional)
3) Air inflatable seat with separate air bladders and controls for both rider and co-rider
4) Pneumatically-controlled auto-levelling system
5) Largest combined storage capacity in its class (comes complete with removable 3-piece soft-sided luggage set)
6) High output 500-watt alternator and built-in electrical accessory terminal
7) Adjustable rider footpegs, co-rider footboards and sliding backrest

riding The Horse of Much Power. Now they were headed for Eagle Country. The Cavalcade feeling sure and steady as they snaked their way through the Rocky Mountains. Paul thought of the business he and Joannie left in the hands of their two sons: fine colonial furniture making, and how it taught him to appreciate the gift of detailing, like the work that went into the LXE.

Paul looked at the world around him. Everything was lush and green, and the foothills shone silver as the wind swept and swirled across the land. The spirit of adventure was rooted deep in their hearts. The sun would break from behind the clouds soon. A great gold dish between the snow-capped peaks.

Life was coming together exactly as it should.



Right on, Suzuki

SUZUKI

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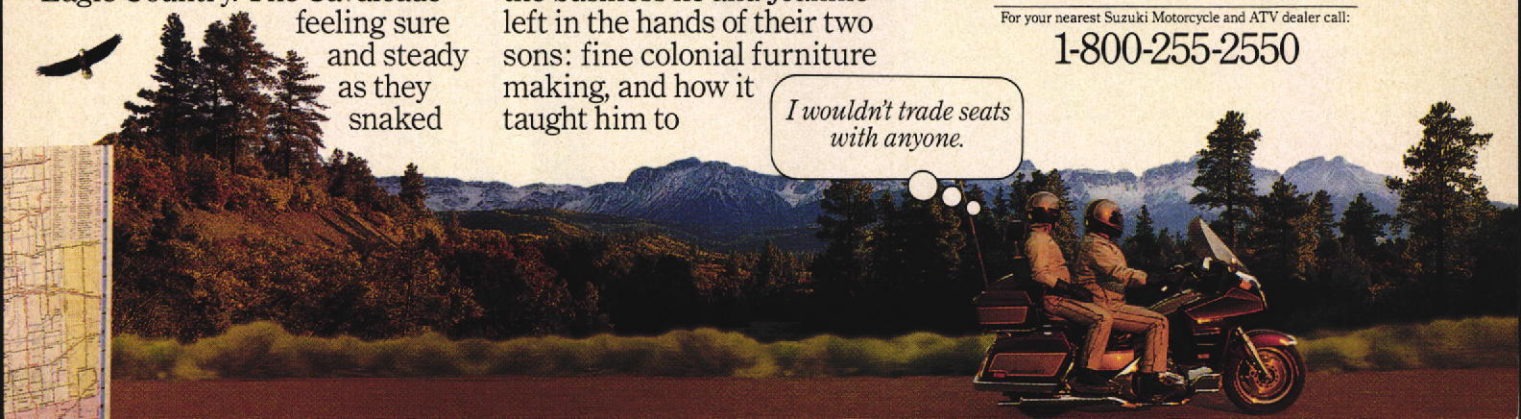
1-800-255-2550



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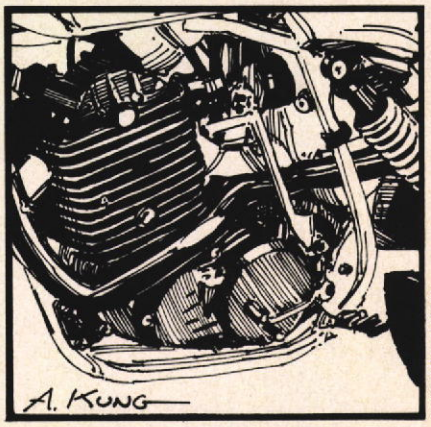

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Asbestos Free sbs Motorcycle Disc Brake Pads

STOP FAST

See Page 24

Miller's Tale

Pyrrhic Victories

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

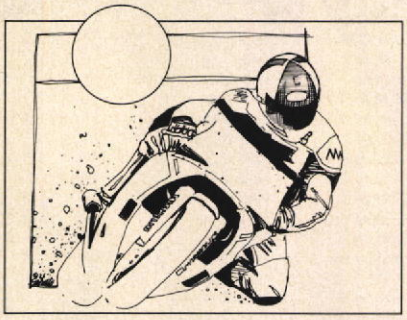
• Well, well, the Double-Nickel is dead. That great tribute to misguided legislation has finally gone the way of the dodo, the passenger pigeon and Prohibition. And while California's legislature squabbled over the specifics of bumping the 55 up to the allowable 65 mph limit, I took the opportunity to celebrate by riding from L.A. back to Tucson and reveling in Arizona's newly posted speed limit.

Crossing the border just outside Yuma, I got a genuine sense of elation as I wicked the throttle up on the FZR1000, knowing that I didn't have to back off until—65 mph, still well *below* my typical cruising speed. In fact, as I clipped across the great Sonoran Desert, I realized that the only difference the increased limit made was that legality was only a throttle-chop away, rather than a throttle-chop and a stab at the brakes. On a roadway so straight that you could fall asleep at the wheel and not run off the road for an hour, the new limit seemed only slightly less ludicrous than the old.

All of which caused me to rethink the demise of the Double-Nickel, and my initial elation evaporated like spit on a Yuma sidewalk. We'd simply been thrown a bone, and the underlying issue—state control of highway speeds—had been neatly sidestepped in a classic backroom legislative compromise. This country's speed limit is still dictated by Washington, D.C., without regard to local road conditions, distance between cities, local safety records, or the design of the Interstate Highway System as a whole.

And in terms of efficient coverage of mileage, U.S. highways will remain the most underutilized pieces of roadway in the world. When the typical automobile was hard pressed to generate 0.6*g* in a corner or stop from 60 mph in less than 300 feet, the typical Interstate was posted for 70 mph—or above. Now that any current econobox—not to mention any modern touring or sportbike—can better those numbers by *one third,* we're expected to adhere to a limit that's *still* 5 miles per hour below that figure.

And the really disturbing facet of this change seems to be that the new limit is going to be enforced much more rigorously than the Double-Nickel. In a recent issue of Autoweek magazine, Tom



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Lankard surveyed the departments of transportation of a number of states, and most of them noted that they intended to start writing tickets for speeds above 65 mph—about the same speed that would earn you a pink slip before the passage of the revised NMSL. So in effect, the actual speed limit for most areas will remain the same. That's not to say that the change is meaningless—far from it. According to the article, most of the states claim that these tickets won't be for "delinquent misuse of a natural resource" or other such bureaucratic slaps on the wrist. They'll be the kind of citations that garner you points on your license and a renewed interest from the Good Hands People.

While I can't vouch for the accuracy of those claims based on my last trip to Evan Mecham's magic kingdom, I did note one rather disturbing change. Previously, the Arizona Highway Patrol used its radar units like homing beacons for wayward B-52s; the units were *always* turned on. If you had a radar detector, the local constabulary stood out like a rhinestone in a pig sty. But this time they seemed to have adopted the stealth approach. I passed three Arizona Highway Patrol cars—two of them with lights ablaze, gloating over freshly caught prey—and the Passport clipped to the FZR's fairing never made a peep. I actually began to doubt the veracity of the electronic eye, until I came up on a functioning radar trap and the unit went off in an orgasm of lights and noise.

And if the experience in Arizona is typical, it seems there's a danger that the bureaucratic attitude might become, "We've given you what you wanted, now behave yourselves." Which of course begs the question, because we *haven't* gotten what we want. In a country with the best roads in the world and with the best motorcycles in history available to us, more than 50 percent of the typical sportbike's performance remains legally out of reach.

And the reason for that artificially low ceiling has nothing to do with safety records or fuel economy, but political expedience. Our Federal legislators finally recognized an undeniable need to change the existing law, but refused to return control to the states, where it belongs. Instead, they bumped it 10 mph, hoping that might be just enough to dull the edge of outrage that most Americans felt while wasting their time on U.S. highways. But the new limit only lessens the *degree* of intrusion—it doesn't eliminate it. And the result, I suppose, should have been expected. Too often, the Federal government is unwilling to relinquish its authority in an area in which it had no business in the first place, and that's what happened. While the Feds loosened their grip slightly, they refused to release their choke hold.

Of course, there's still hope things could change. James Baxter, of Citizens' Coalition for Rational Traffic Laws, points out that once the initial elation about the demise of the 55-mph speed limit, Americans will become disenchanted with its restrictions. They will recognize the current law as being a step in the right direction, but far too compromised, and too timid to represent genuine improvement. As such, the new "rural" restriction represents only a slight improvement over the previous federal limit, because—by definition—it excludes the roadways we travel most. Fortunately, the avenues for change—particularly CCRTL itself—are already in place. Consequently, the organization exists to keep things moving in the right direction, and to prevent such knee-jerk, stop-gap legislation from becoming law in the future.

But don't think for a minute that the National Maximum Speed Limit is gone—far from it. We have to ensure it doesn't wind up more firmly entrenched than ever. So while our legislators walk away, dusting their hands and patting themselves on the back after once again sidestepping a thorny issue, I can only hope that we haven't spent our time asking for sirloin, and settled for tube steak instead.

—Jim Miller

CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Honda ATC350X-'85	September '85	ATV	Four-stroke	8.0/7.0	324	23.0/1.4	6
Honda FourTrax 4x4-'86	Nov./Dec. '85	ATV	Four-stroke	4.1/4.6	570	3.0/0.5	5
Honda CR250R-'87	Dec./Jan. '87	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/11.1	224	27.3/4.49	5
Honda CR500R-'85	February '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	232	27.5/4.41	5
Honda CR500-'87	Aug./Sept. '87	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.6/11.0	247	27.5/4.49	5
Honda XR200R-'86	July '86	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.4/10.5	226	27.0/4.53	6
Honda XR250R-'86	July '86	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.4/11.0	250	26.5/4.33	6
Honda XR600R-'85	October '85	Desert	Four-stroke	10.9/11.4	284	28.0/4.65	5
Husqvarna 250WRX-'85	August '85	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.8/12.5	239	27.0/4.72	6
Husqvarna 430 Auto-'86	March '86	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.7/11.5	245	27.0/4.72	3
Husqvarna 510 Enduro-'87	Oct./Nov. '86	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/11.8	261	27.0/4.72	6
Husqvarna 510TE-'85	March '85	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.6/11.9	263	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 430 Enduro-'87	Aug./Sept. '87	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.7/10.3	245	27.0/4.72	6
Kawasaki KDX200-'86	March '86	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	225	26.5/5.31	6
Kawasaki KX125-'87	February '87	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.0/11.6	199	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
KTM 350 Enduro-'87	June '87	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.5/13.1	241	27.0/4.80	5
KTM 500MX-'86	June '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	10.9/10.8	227	28.0/N/A	5
Suzuki Quadracer 250-'85	May '85	ATV	Two-stroke	7.2/8.1	326	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'85	May '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.4/11.8	202	29.0/4.84	6
Yamaha BW200-'85	April '85	Trail	Four-stroke	6.3/6.6	249	27.3/3.46	5
Yamaha TT350-'86	May '86	Trail	Four-stroke	10.4/9.3	261	27.5/4.53	6
Yamaha TT600-'85	October '85	Trail	Four-stroke	11.3/10.7	283	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha TY350-'85	July '85	Trials	Two-stroke	6.5/4.8	193	23.0/1.93	6
Yamaha XT600-'86	Aug./Sept. '86	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.4/9.2	317	28.0/4.21	5
Yamaha YZ250-'86	April '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.0	225	28.0/4.69	5

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW K75C-'86	June '86	3I/G	740.4	13.171/102.03	121	480	37–54	142
BMW K75S-'87	Dec./Jan. '87	3I/G	740.4	13.511/98.90	115	494	36–48	139
BMW K100-'86	March '86	4I/G	987.2	12.412/108.82	122	506	35–46	139
BMW K100RT-'86	May '86	4I/G	987.2	13.255/98.90	130	595	39–44	124
BMW R80-'85	September '85	2C/G	782.5	13.357/98.36	114	439	37–52	148
Cagiva Alazzurra 650 SS-'86	February '86	90 deg. 2D/F	649.6	12.982/99.18	113	432	34–49	135
Cagiva/Ducati Paso-'87	Aug./Sept. '87	90 deg. 2D/F	748.1	13.890/95.64	124	480	31–47	123
H-D FLST Heritage Special-'87	April '87	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	15.200/82.87	99	687	35–49	132
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'86	May '86	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.378/90.00	107	748	39–48	141
H-D FXRS Low Rider Sport-'87	Dec./Jan. '87	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.011/93.84	115	578	36–45	127
H-D XLH 883 Sportster-'86	September '85	45 deg. 2D/F	882.9	14.045/92.40	106	467	37–67	131
Honda CBR400-'87	February '87	4A/F	399.1	12.943/102.62	136	391	39–56	124
Honda CBR600 Hurricane-'87	June '87	4A/F	598.5	12.024/112.07	137	430	31–50	103
Honda CBR1000 Hurricane-'87	April '87	4A/F	998.4	10.982/126.05	154	545	35–51	117
Honda Gold Wing Aspencade-'86	May '86	4C/G	1181.9	13.590/96.56	114	761	32–48	120
Honda NS400R-'85	October '85	90 deg. 3D/F††	387.4	12.324/108.69	125	392	25–45	135
Honda VF700C Magna-'85	August '85	90 deg. 4D/G	698.9	12.390/108.82	128	520	34–47	131
Honda VFR750F Interceptor-'86	June '86	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.407/120.48	144	476	33–55	128
Honda VF1000R-'85	July '85	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.308/121.78	149	578	20–42	135
Honda VT1100C Shadow-'85	June '85	45 deg. 2D/G	1099.2	13.022/100.33	112	560	33–44	127
Kawasaki Concours-'86	Aug./Sept. '86	4A/G	997.8	12.497/106.13	130	633	32–58	125
Kawasaki Eliminator-'85	April '85	4A/G	908.2	11.405/117.49	134	569	22–41	131
Kawasaki EX500-'87	March '87	2A/F	498.9	12.991/100.67	123	400	30–85	114
Kawasaki 454 LTD-'85	September '85	2A/H	454.1	13.386/97.08	102	427	37–53	125
Kawasaki Ninja 600R-'88	June '87	4A/F	592.6	12.106/110.42	135	430	37–60	131
Kawasaki Ninja 750R-'87	May '87	4A/F	748.1	11.502/117.03	148	471	29–58	130
Kawasaki Ninja 1000R-'86	January '86	4A/F	997.8	10.994/125.69	162	564	33–44	118
Kawasaki Voyager-'86	May '86	6A/G	1286.1	13.240/99.44	119	878	32–39	142
Kawasaki Voyager XII-'86	July '86	4A/G	1196.5	13.015/101.01	125	732	30–46	126
Kawasaki ZL1000-'87	Oct./Nov. '86	4A/G	997.8	11.676/112.07	141	567	31–43	130
Suzuki GSX-R400-'87	February '87	4A/F	398.0	13.307/98.25	125	369	35–52	122
Suzuki GSX-R750-'86	April '86	4A/F	749.7	11.566/116.42	142	437	30–47	136
Suzuki GSX-R1100-'86	July '87	4A/F	1052.5	10.839/126.22	146	476	30–47	128
Suzuki GV1400GD Cavalcade LX-'86	May '86	82 deg. 4D/G	1360.4	12.881/101.12	115	806	32–43	155
Suzuki RG500 Gamma-'85	October '85	Square-Four/F††	498.5	11.991/113.20	N/A	374	22–42	134
Suzuki VS700 Intruder-'85	July '85	2D/G	699.7	12.998/101.01	112	442	44–63	132
Suzuki VS1400 Intruder-'87	May '87	2D/G	1360.2	13.451/95.44	118	557	30–53	135
Yamaha FJ1200-'86	July '86	4A/F	1188.4	10.851/127.47	147	539	32–43	132
Yamaha FZR400-'87	February '87	45 deg. 4A/F	399.0	12.820/102.50	133	385	33–52	124
Yamaha FZR1000-'87	July '87	45 deg. 4A/F	986.6	10.899/127.84	153	496	33–52	128
Yamaha FZ750-'86	March '86	45 deg. 4A/F	749.6	11.383/118.26	145	494	37–45	127
Yamaha Venture Royale-'86	May '86	70 deg. 4D/G	1294.0	12.998/101.01	136†	784	39–44	130
Yamaha V-Max-'85	May '85	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	10.922/127.47	151	596	23–32	137
Yamaha XV700 Virago-'86	March '86	75 deg. 2D/G	699.2	13.686/96.46	104†	489	39–48	130
Yamaha XV1000 Virago-'85	October '85	75 deg. 2D/G	981.0	12.993/101.59	111	507	33–47	132

***A**-Transverse, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive, **I**-Horizontal Longitudinal; † indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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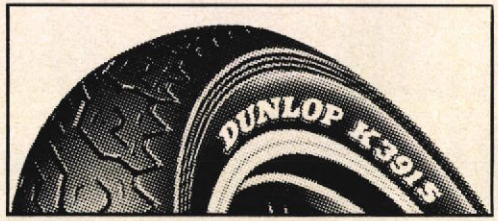

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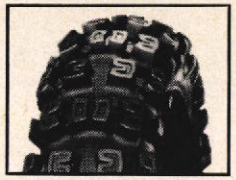

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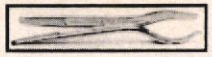

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ABATE AND SWITCH

To Jim Miller: I know you're catching a lot of heat from ABATE about your editorial, "Mountains from Molehills," and I'd like to tell you I applaud your work. It's one thing to argue the Constitutional angle of helmet legislation but quite another to spread false and misleading information about the actual performance of helmets.

I wonder if mandatory vehicle registration and driver licensing is also an infringement upon individual liberties by ABATE's definition. It's high time ABATE members were seen for what they are, a small minority of riders who have yet to grow up to the legal, economic and intellectual realities of a modern society. But then, perhaps it's presumptuous of me to assume all motorcyclists have brains worth saving.

The real pity is that this small group of mental midgets can so drastically influence public policy on highway loss reduction. Public referendums are a better means of determining policy regarding helmet use than special interest lobbying by riders who lack the social niceties brought on by being in touch with reality.

As a friend of mine said, "I respect their desire to ride without a helmet, but I would respect even more their willingness to die without my financial assistance."

Dale A. Jenkins
McFarland, Wisconsin

RECESS IS OVER

Regarding "The Last Word" in the letters column of the June 1987 issue: Is it possible, Mr. Signature Illegible, that you're irate (upset, angry) about Mr. Miller's editorial because you couldn't understand it? Does everything you read and write have to have profane (bad) language (words)? Stop me if I'm going too fast for you.

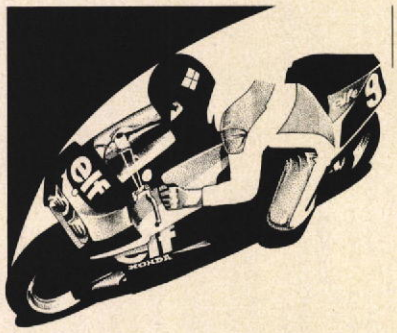
Perhaps it's you who needs to get his cranium (head) out of his rectum (ass) and go back to grammar school. I'm sure CYCLE GUIDE is grieving (sad over) the loss of such a valuable client (you).

D. Boyd
Greensboro, South Carolina

Not to mention the many other ABATE members who wrote us—all 19 of them—ed.

GILLIES GRIPES

After reading the "Sport Tour-Off" in your May issue, I enjoyed all of them except Mike Gillies' "The Fast Getaway." The entire article seemed to suggest that



if you're not riding twice the speed limit you're not really sport touring. People who ride on public roads in the manner Gillies describes are a menace to themselves and everyone else. I also think CYCLE GUIDE was remiss in printing the article.

Paul Hildreth
Ventura, California

We promise we'll never do it again. Ever. Honest—ed.

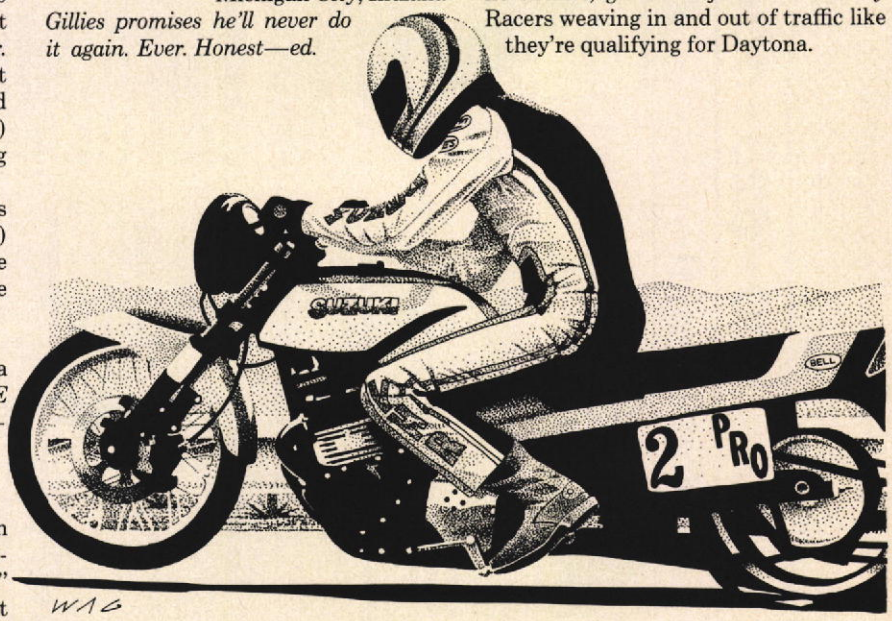
RUSHIN' ROULETTE

I was stunned by Mike Gillies' article in the May issue, stressing "it isn't where you go, it's how fast you get there."

Publishing the article after suggesting the idea to Gillies in the first place makes it look like CYCLE GUIDE endorses excessively fast riding. Are the rest of us supposed to cross our fingers as we pull out onto the highway in hopes that Gillies isn't flying around the bend at 125 mph?

Allan Murray
Michigan City, Indiana

Gillies promises he'll never do it again. Ever. Honest—ed.



BLACKTOP BOZOS

Right on, Dan Sorenson (Voice From the Wilderness, June 1987 issue)! Driver incompetence is *the* highway safety problem. Stricter licensing and traffic law enforcement could help solve this problem. Instead we get Band-Aids (a National Speed Limit, seatbelt and helmet laws) on a bullet wound (driver incompetence).

John Haldeman
Moore, Oklahoma

And if all that weren't bad enough, we have to watch out for Mike Gillies, too—ed.

FAST LANE FOLLIES

With regard to your CYCLE GUIDE's Cycle Guide in the June 1987 issue: I'd love to trade my 250 Ninja for the one you tested that ran 148 mph. Mine runs out of steam at 105 mph.

Rodney Scott
Odessa, Texas

Our typesetter runs out of steam sooner than that. The Ninja 750 went 148, not the 250—ed.

YOU MEAT THE NICEST PEOPLE

I just finished reading Dan Sorenson's "Meatheads Are Unsafe At Any Speed." I agree with him completely. In 14 years of riding I've seen lots of fat bald guys in white Buicks, little old ladies who can't see over the steering wheel and more recently young female yuppie airheads in new BMWs climbing up my tail to pass.

But there are also plenty of meatheads on two wheels—macho types with no helmet, gloves or jacket and Ricky Racers weaving in and out of traffic like they're qualifying for Daytona.

Let's face it, Dan, you, your brother and I are great riders, but the rest of these guys are, well, meatheads.

Robin Orr
Long Beach, California

ATTENTION K-MART CHOPPERS

Your comparison of the FXRS and the Intruder (May 1987 issue) was incomplete. It left out the biggest single difference between the two bikes, a difference that also explains why the Japanese dominate the motorcycle market: price.

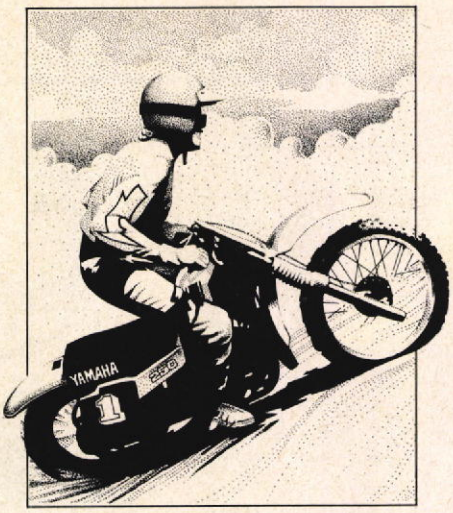
Most people have few doubts that the Harley is a better bike overall. But is $2900 better?

Andrew Kvammen
Pasadena, California

Everybody in this office thinks so—ed.

QUIBBLES AND SNITS

So OK, great, so the $8800, top-of-the-line no-expense-spared Harley Low Rider Sport is a better bike than one that was designed to be the motorcycling equivalent of a lava lamp. Suzuki stylists have either gotten so out of hand they can't see their own abominations, or



they have a really weird sense of humor.

Next month why not compare the Low Rider Sport to its closest functional competition, the Honda Rebel 450? And when you're done, explain why the better machine costs so much less.

Paul Gizelt
Brooklyn, New York

It's true what they say about Brooklyn, isn't it?—ed.

AND THE WIENER IS . . .

Can you please explain to me how in the latest round of Quickest and Fastest you gave top honors to the bike with the third lowest ET and the second highest top speed?

Stephen Kintzley
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

TIME AFTER TIME

On page 19 of "Quickest and Fastest" in the July 1987 issue, there are just too many inconsistencies between the times in the text and those shown on the bar graph at the top of the page. Which set of figures is correct?

Bob Goddard
Boone, North Carolina

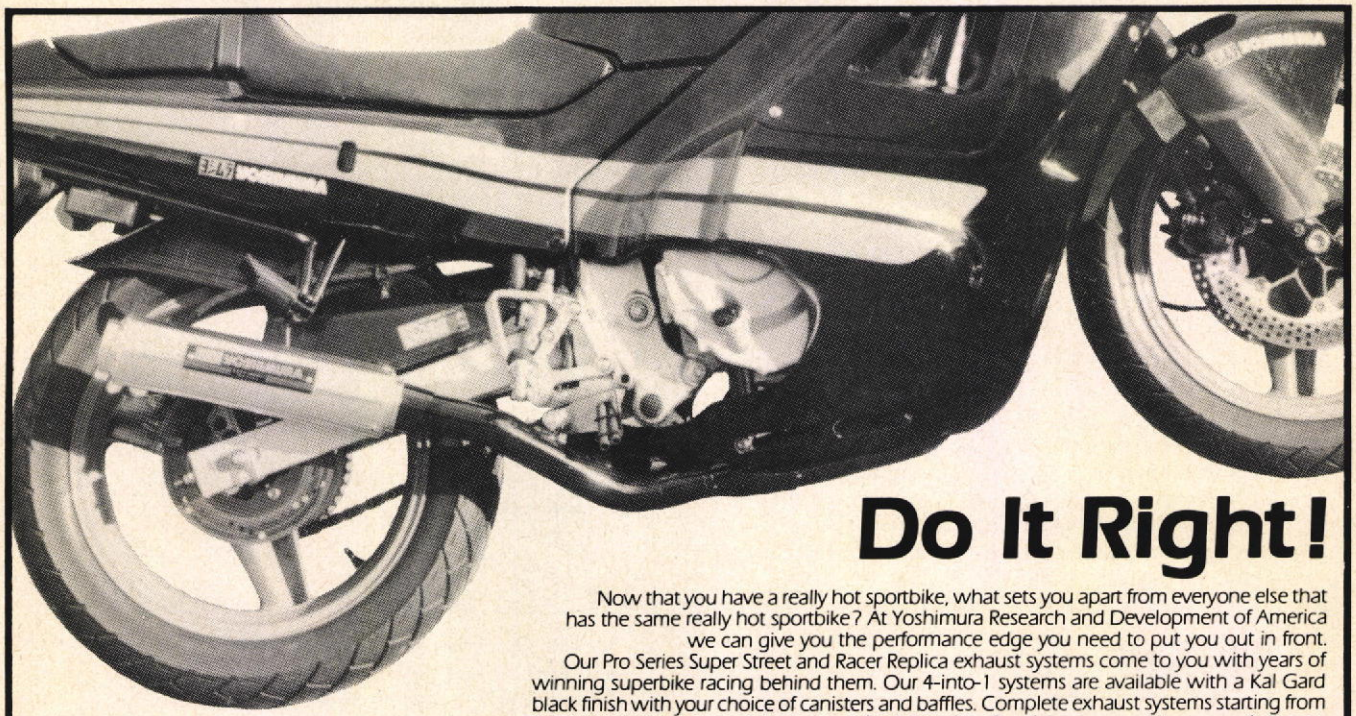
Darn those pesky typesetters. The times in the text are the correct times. The bar graph represents times run by Mike Gillies during normal road testing—ed.

THIS WAY TO THE GREAT EGRESS

I really enjoyed your last issue.

Billy Bob
Wardensville, West Virginia

So did we. By the way, the folks at Avis are still calling here looking for you— ed.



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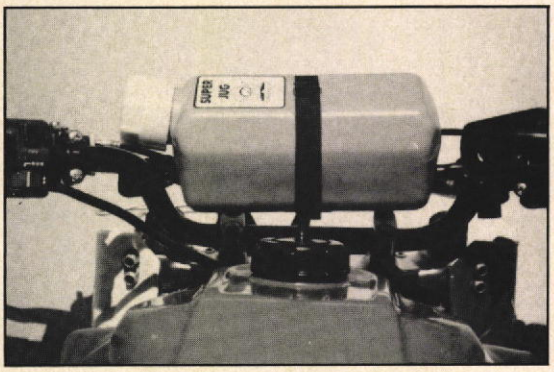

Here Come The Jug: It takes a supreme jug to do justice to *real* off-road thirsts. Tumbleweed swears its two-quart Super Jug bolts onto all crossbars, has a mouth big enough for ice cubes, and comes in blue, red, white or yellow for a suggested $24.99 retail price. For a complete docket, direct all questions to Tumbleweed Enterprises, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 3607, Torrance, California 90505.

Headin' Out: The MR1 looks like it might keep a Neanderthal's chin up, but Krauter VauTron says the one-piece fiberglass shell strengthens high-impact areas. The DOT-approved hat has an adjustable one-piece chinstrap and scratch-resistant faceshield. The MR1 comes in black, gray, red or white, sizes XS-XL, for a $350 retail price. For more, contact Krauter VauTron USA, Dept. CG, 489 E. Highland Road, Macedonia, Ohio 44056.

Promised Land: To help fight legislation restricting millions of acres of desert used for recreation such as dirt riding and camping, the California Desert Coalition is selling paperback map books. The books are 15-by-11 inches and include data such as topography, communities and attractions in either Southern or Northern California. Each book goes for an $11 donation; contact Pat Davison at CDC, 6192 Magnolia Ave., Suite D, Riverside, California 92506.

CamCam: Dancing in the dark over your four-wheeler's performance is sheer folly. You might get back in step with Web-Cam's new Honda FourTrax 250 camshafts. They're treated for longer life in recreational use or all-out racing, the manufacturer says, and each carries a suggested retail price of $90. For the complete score, step out with Web-Cam, Dept. CG, 12387 Doherty St., Riverside, California 92503.

True Grit: Biting the bullet over your Hurricane 600's seat? Corbin's bolt-on Gunfighter saddle sports foam cushions and handsewn covers that help in a showdown. There's the Gunfighter & Lady saddle, too, made for riding into a sunset together; an optional backrest is $92. Both saddles are black with red side panels and white or black welts, and each is $160. Be the big gun in town; contact Corbin, Dept. CG, 123-C Lee Road, Box 1562, Watsonville, California 95077.

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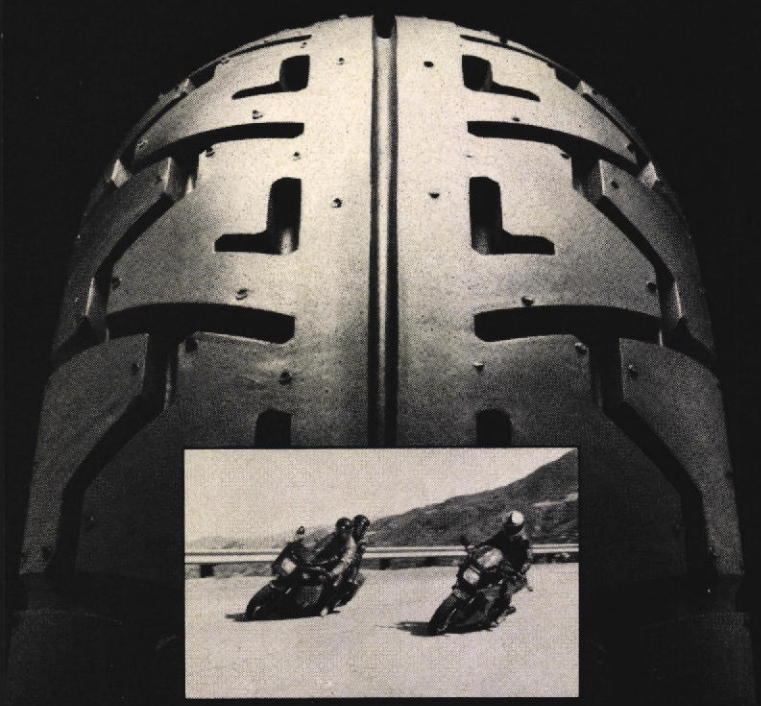

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BY JERRY SMITH

The last word in moto-excellence.

In some ways, 1987 has been less than a banner year for motorcycling. The yen got stronger, the dollar got weaker and fewer riders stepped up to join the ranks of enthusiasts. Even veteran motorcyclists had fewer bikes to choose from this year, the result of belt-tightening by all the manufacturers.

That doesn't mean this gloom-and-doom scenario has pervaded all of motorcycling, however. There have been plenty of bright spots in the past 12 months, too. One manufacturer introduced a twin-cylinder sportbike that breaks almost all the rules by being fast, good-handling and economical all at the same time. Another company called up its own past to create one bike, and drew on the best the present has to offer for another.

In addition, countries, not just manufacturers, figure in this year's Silver Bullet Awards, too. The resurgent Italian motorcycle industry is making front page news, and Korea, a nation hardly even considered in the past to be a threat in the world motorcycle market, is making its bid for a slice of the American pie. And Japan is still in the hunt, of course, serving up an assortment of new machinery ranging from an awesome new literbike to a precocious mini-GP bike.

In the following pages you'll find all these bikes, and others, each one our pick as one of the most significant motorcycles of 1987. But only one can wear the Cloak of Chrome, and this year it's so good, we're considering retiring the title. So read on and feast your eyes on the Best of 1987—but wear your sunglasses, because the winner is a real dazzler. *Continued*

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Honda Hurricane 600

• Bike of the Year balloting is a real test of character for the CYCLE GUIDE staff. Because the Cloak of Chrome is traditionally bestowed on the year's most *significant* motorcycle—rather than just the quickest, the fastest or the most technically advanced—staffers must put aside personal feelings about their favorite bikes of the past 12 months. Instead, we cast ballots for the one that stands out by virtue of not so much its performance as its overall importance to the motorcycle industry. But this year's voting was a pleasant change from years gone by, because the Honda Hurricane 600, the most significant bike of 1987 by a virtually unanimous decision, also turned out to be the one everyone liked the best.

True, the Hurricane is neither the quickest nor the fastest bike offered for sale in the past year. As far as sheer technical wizardry goes, the Hurricane's engine is almost a step backwards from the high-tech vee-four Honda sportbike powerplants that preceded it. And while the rest of the Hurricane's spec sheet might not dazzle you with techno-trickery, its marching orders included one particular bit of fancy footwork that demanded no less a commitment from Honda designers than any of the company's legendary mechanical marvels of the past. Because while the engineers kept their eyes on the Hurricane's performance, the corporate accountants kept theirs on the balance sheet, and neither priority was allowed to compromise the other.

Under those conditions, the burden of designing and building a bike that performs and handles as well as the Hurricane 600 does might seem like setting the stage for a meeting of the irresistable force and the immovable object. But to their credit, Honda engineers pulled it off. The appearance of the Hurricane's homely, almost agricultural-looking engine—devoid of any costly "styling" of its exterior components—belies its performance, with its broad power spread and class-leading top-end surge. In addition, the Hurricane's chassis, composed of mild-steel round- and square-section tubing, delivers precise handling at any speed, and the bike's single rear shock and 37mm front fork glide over potholes and pavement ripples while maintaining a taut, responsive feel unequaled by any bike in its class.

Moreover, it's the opinion of CG staffers that the Hurricane 600's overall balance is also unequaled by quite a few bikes in other classes, as well. The Hurricane heralds a new era of sporting machinery built with attention to the basics—handling, acceleration and braking—without compromising economy and everyday utility. In an era where the rising tide of sportbike performance is all too often accompanied by a rising spiral of cost and a daunting dominance of form over function, that's an achievement every motorcycle rider can appreciate. It's an achievement other manufacturers will surely emulate in the future, too. If the sportbike market is to move ahead and not bog down under its own expense and complexity, they'll have to. So while next year's winner of the Cloak of Chrome is anybody's guess, one thing's for sure—sportbikes of the future will almost certainly pay homage to the Honda Hurricane 600, CYCLE GUIDE's 1987 Bike of the Year.

Kawasaki EX500

© 1987 JOE KRESS

• Although the Hurricane 600's election to Bike of the Year was practically a foregone conclusion from the first ballot, every election has its dark horse, and in this case a sentimental favorite almost carried the day. Kawasaki's EX500 all but matched the Hurricane's brilliance in practically every category except sheer performance, an area in which the EX's twin-cylinder engine falls short of the class standard.

But not by much. While its 499cc, twin-cam, liquid-cooled engine doesn't put out enough power to make you forget about fours, it'll surely make you think twice about twins. And if you ever get over the thrill of a twin-cylinder engine with a broader power spread and less vibration than some four-cylinder engines, you can entertain yourself with the EX's laser-accurate steering, plush suspension, tenacious Bridgestone tires and front brake that hauls the EX down from 60 mph in 114 feet, the shortest braking distance we've ever recorded save one—the 600 Hurricane's.

The EX500's endearing qualities don't stop with its power and handling. The middleweight Kawasaki is attractive for several less obvious—though no less important—reasons. Its size and weight make it an ideal beginner bike, and its ergonomics are among the most user-friendly in the sportbike field. Throw in thrifty gas mileage and a suggested retail price just a dollar shy of $3000, and you've got a motorcycle that pleases just about anyone who swings a leg over it. We predict quite a few riders will be doing just that, too, and enjoying motorcycling more than they thought possible on the Bike of the Year runner-up, the Kawasaki EX500.

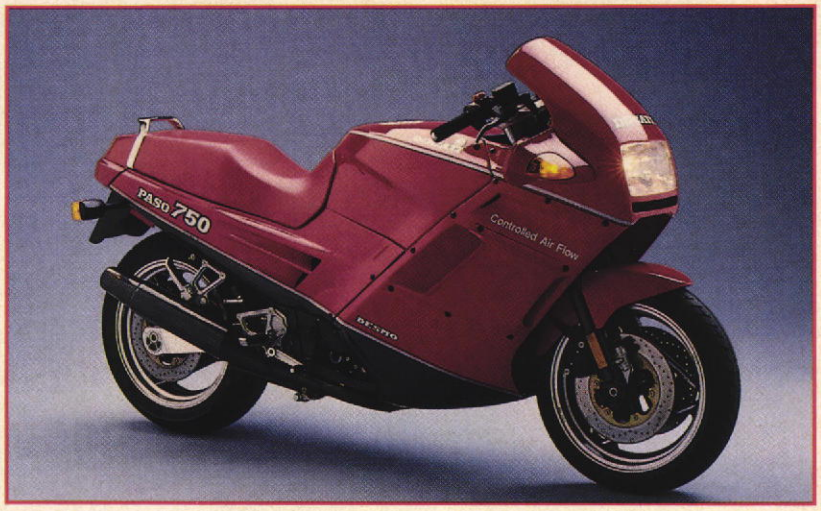
Harley-Davidson FXRS Sport Edition

• There are still quite a few riders who think all Harley-Davidsons shake like a jackhammer, accelerate with the fury of a glacier and handle like a waterbed on wheels. While Harleys of days gone by might well have nurtured this misconception, it's no longer the case. Anyone who still holds dear this hoary stereotype of Milwaukee motorcycles probably hasn't ridden one lately, and it's a sure thing he hasn't ridden the FXRS Sport Edition, arguably the most advanced, well-thought-out and polished Harley in the company's extensive lineup.

All it takes to dispel any lingering doubts about Harley's progress in recent years is to swing a leg over the FXRS. From the first stab of the starter button, its five-speed Evolution vee-twin throbs with hearty torque that thrills your bones without rattling your teeth, thanks to astonishingly effective rubber mounting. The FXRS's suspension is calibrated uncannily close to the sweet spot of the pamper-zone, too, delivering both back-road handling and an everyday ride unequalled by Japanese cruisers. And while the FXRS isn't about to suck the lights out of the Christmas tree at the local dragstrip, the thundering vee-twin has more than enough sheer, barrel-chested brawn to keep all but the most crazed horsepower junkie satisfied.

And satisfaction is where the FXRS shines brightest. It's not only the best all-around motorcycle from Milwaukee, it's one of the most versatile and downright entertaining devices on two wheels. Even though the FXRS didn't earn top Bike of the Year honors, it stands out as one of the best bikes of this or any other year.

Cagiva/Ducati Paso



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• History repeats itself. There's a new Italian Renaissance—in motorcycling, this time—and it's giving birth to some of the most innovative and appealing motorcycles ever to come from a European manufacturer. The Cagiva/Ducati Paso marks the zenith of Italian sportbike design, combining traditional Ducati trademarks, such as a vee-twin engine and desmodromic valve actuation, with the latest in single-shock frame technology and fully enclosed aerodynamic bodywork, thanks to an influx of capital via the Cagiva connection.

The Paso also represents a pleasing—and from Italy, practically heretofore unknown—blend of performance and practicality. Unlike previous Ducati sportbikes, with their contorted seating positions, all-or-nothing suspension compliance and upholstered granite seats, the Paso recognizes that one need not suffer unduly for the sake of performance. And to make sure the level of that performance is as high as it can be, the Paso's state-of-the-art chassis is equipped with Brembo brakes, a Marzocchi fork and single rear shock and 16-inch wheels shod with low-profile Pirelli radials.

Combining traditional elements of Italian sportbike design to achieve high performance is something the Italians have always tried to do. But never has this method produced a bike that presents so formidable a challenge to Japanese sportbikes while still retaining that unique Italobike flair. The Paso marks the maturity of Italian sportbikes, and it's a coming-of-age the whole world has been waiting for.

Harley-Davidson FLST Heritage Softail Special

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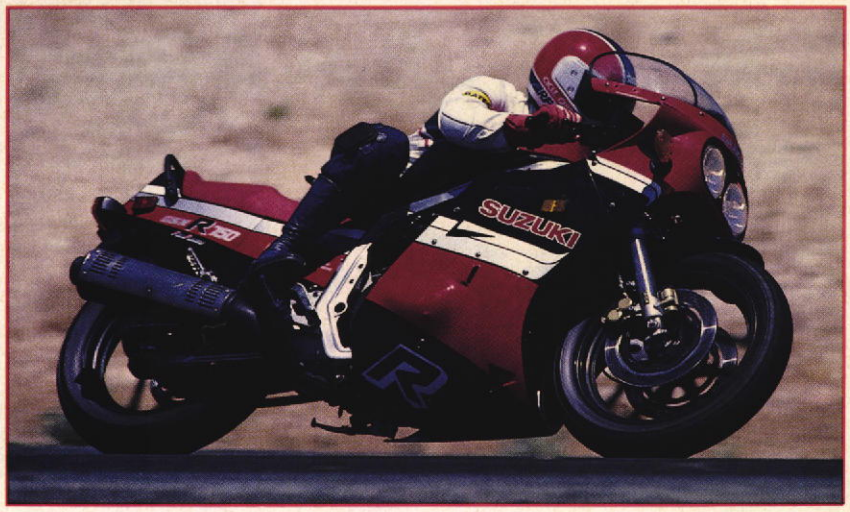
• Everyone else has been copying Harley-Davidson for so long that Harley finally decided to show them how it's done—by copying itself. It shows real moxie on Milwaukee's part to build a Harley that looks almost exactly the way Harleys looked in a time before many of today's riders were even born. To put it in perspective, try to imagine Honda or Kawasaki tooling up to build brand new 305 Super Hawks or Mach IIIs and selling them in sufficient numbers to make back their investment. If you believe any manufacturer but Harley would not only contemplate such a move but actually pull it off, we've got a deal for you on a bridge in Brooklyn.

But save your money. The Heritage Softail Special is a lot cheaper and a lot more fun. Most of the fun originates in the Heritage's '50s-era styling licks, like its twin-cap gas tank, fringed leather saddlebags, twin front running lights and flawless two-tone paint job. But underneath the '50s flash there's an honest, competent motorcycle, powered by a five-speed Evolution engine with belt final drive. And even though the Heritage's Softail rear suspension and beefy front fork evoke the look of old-time Harleys, both deliver a ride more up-to-date than you'd expect from mere period pieces.

And that's the real beauty of the Heritage Softail Special. In a world where form so often comes at the expense of function, the Heritage exacts no such penalty, combining the timeless styling of one of the most distinctive motorcycles of the past with the comfort and handling of the present—and an honorable mention in this year's Bike of the Year awards.

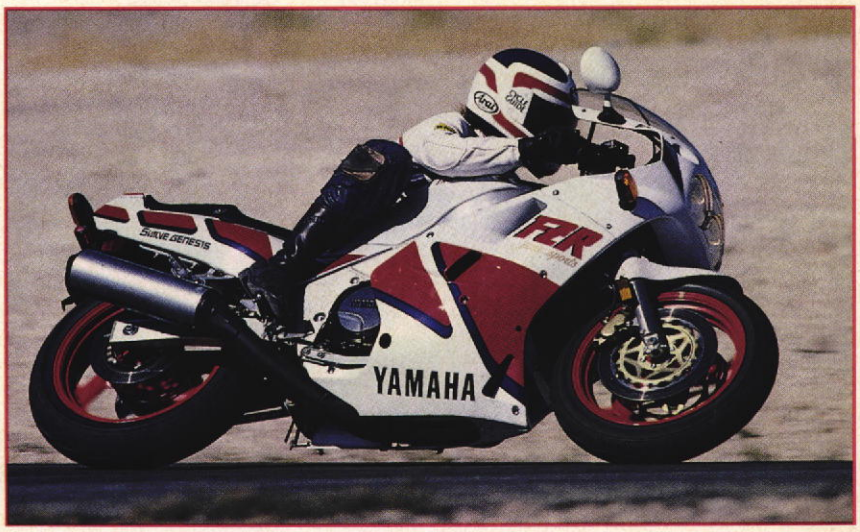


Suzuki GSX-R750

• Sometimes it's hard to tell whether the advances in sportbike technology represent change in the name of progress or just change for the sake of change. Each new year's crop of bikes seems to obsolete completely the previous generation, leaving owners of even year-old sportbikes to wonder how soon yesterday's motomarvel will become tomorrow's asthmatic antique. One company, at least, has managed to stem the flood tides of rampant technology in a novel way, not by pulling out the stops and creating the most dazzling example of two-wheel wizardry ever seen, but by the simple expedient of getting it right the first time.

That first time came in 1985, when Suzuki introduced the GSX-R750 in Europe. The next year the lightweight GSX-R, with its aluminum frame and air/oil-cooled engine, made its way to American shores and it's been thriving ever since, basically unchanged from its 1985 European specs. Those specifications were pretty good back then, and those same figures are still good enough to carry legions of GSX-R750 riders to victory in club races nationwide, not to mention within spitting distance of victory in this year's Daytona 200.

In 1987, the Suzuki GSX-R750 once again adheres to the often little-heeded philosophy that says if it ain't broke, don't fix it. What few changes it can boast this year come across more as the result of careful refinement than wholesale redesign. That's not only good news for GSX-R racers but for for GSX-R street riders, as well, who no longer have to wonder how soon their bikes will be outdated, only how long they'll keep winning races.



Yamaha FZR1000R

• The sporting literbike pendulum swings to both extremes this year, from bikes like the Kawasaki Ninja 1000R—fast and comfortable but heavy and with uninspired handling—to bikes like Suzuki's GSX-R1100—light on its feet and the scales, but about as comfortable as a vinyl-covered two-by-four. It seems that comfort and utility in the literbike class come only at the expense of performance and handling, the very qualities that draw most riders to the class in the first place.

The pendulum is swinging back toward middle ground, though, if Yamaha's FZR1000R is any indication. The FZR has the power literbike riders lust after, thanks to its 20-valve, liquid-cooled Genesis engine. And when it comes to handling, the FZR's aluminum Delta Box frame, inspired by Yamaha's World Championship-winning 500cc Grand Prix bikes, makes nary a misstep while arcing through high-speed sweepers and tight corners alike.

But what really puts the Yamaha a cut above the competition is its civilized demeanor at less than a ten-tenths pace. Around town or on the freeway, the FZR's engine burbles along contentedly, exhibiting none of the high-strung tendencies of some other literbikes. Likewise, its suspension is as happy dispatching urban potholes as apex bumps. The FZR brings a new dimension to the literbike class, one that other manufacturers will surely copy. Literbike riders can now have their cake and eat it too, and the FZR1000R has the sweetest taste in the big-bore class.

Continued

Trac 100

• There's an old show-business axiom that says if they liked it once, they'll love it twice. That's just what Trac is hoping to prove with the Trac 100. The Trac is manufactured in Korea, and if its engine looks practically identical to that of the Honda S90, a sturdy, evergreen little mill that's probably propelled more two-wheel vehicles worldwide than any other powerplant in the history of motorcycling, that's because Trac's parent company, Daelim Motor Company Ltd., once made Hondas for Korea under a licensing agreement with Honda.

In addition to the visual similarity and extensive parts interchangeability, Trac is hoping something else from the Honda legacy will rub off on the Trac 100. Motorcycling is up against a critical shortage of new riders these days, and the Trac 100 fills a gap in today's market virtually identical to that filled by the original Honda S90 back when Harley and the British dominated the two-wheel scene. Beginning riders intimidated by big-bores flocked to the friendly lightweights in droves, spurring not only Honda's fortunes but those of the Japanese motorcycle industry, as well.

It's difficult to say whether the Trac 100 can accomplish the same feat for Trac and the Korean motorcycle industry, but it's easy to see that even today the diminutive single fills a niche in the motorcycle market. With a suggested retail price of $895, it's an affordable little scoot with a dash of panache, about as complicated as a rock and capable of seating an adult comfortably. And while it might seem no great shakes right now, ask any Harley or Triumph rider who was around in the 60s what he thought of the first Honda S90 he ever saw.

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Yamaha YSR50

• There's a little-known tradition at Yamaha that's been going on for some time now. Each year, when the lineup bearing the crossed-tuning-fork logo is announced, there's at least one model with a distinct odd-man-out look about it—such as the four-stroke vertical twin XS-1, for instance, and more recently the vee-twin Vision and the SR500 and SRX6 thumpers. This year is no different from previous years, with the single-cylinder SRX250 and the TW200, a dual-purpose hydrid of the fat-tired BW-series off-road bikes. But Yamaha's real wild card this year is the YSR50, a bike that puts a new curve on the mini-replica GP bike theme—the YSR50 is street legal.

And here in trendy Southern California, at least, riders by the score are taking to the streets and canyons aboard YSR50s, strafing apexes with knees *and* elbows skipping over the tarmac and leaving pedestrians scrambling for safety, fearing for their ankles. The YSR might not be long on speed, but all you need is a parking lot and three or four YSR-mounted buddies to stage your own Lilliputian Grand Prix. The YSR's single hydraulic front disc brake encourages late-braking maneuvers that would give Eddie Lawson the heebie-jeebies, and even the greenest mini-GP rookie can grind hero-scrapes along the belly pan on his first lap.

If there was a Mini-Bike of the Year award, Yamaha's YSR50 would carry it off, hands down. Right now, the YSR is already way ahead on points in the Wild Championship, both on the street and down pit lane, and Yamaha will have to come up something pretty outrageous next year to top it. •

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GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY LARRY WORKS

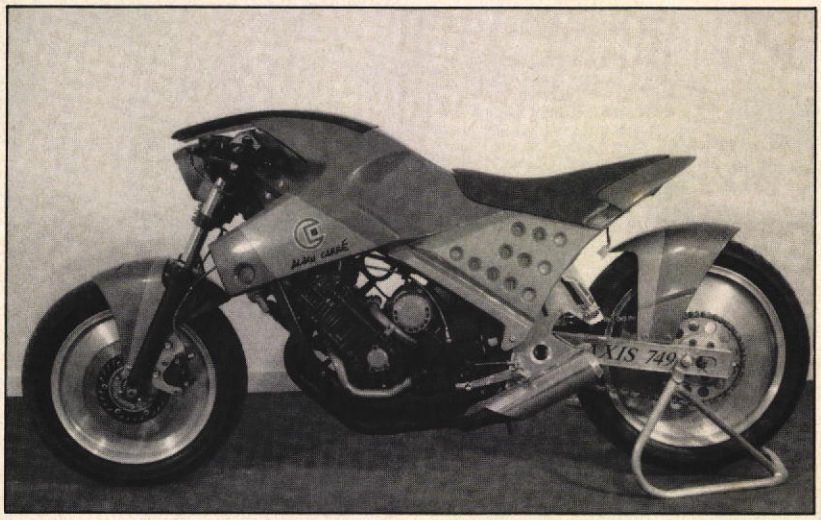
COMING SOON

• The motorcycle world is unquestionably owned by the majors from late October to mid-April. That's the period when the big factories traditionally slip the sheets off the production bikes that have been percolating in design studios and engineering workshops for months, sometimes years. All the two-wheel world's attention is riveted, glued and otherwise affixed to those extensive product lines, not only to see who's got what, but to begin the process of figuring out which bikes are going to go head-to-head, and which ones are going to survive.

With all that hoopla, all that public attention flitting from bike to bike, it's no wonder that smaller manufacturers pay little more than lip service to that October–April time slot. Why should they? Unveiling one new machine, no matter how good it is, against 50 or 60 competitors is a little like pitching a flawless 50-carat round-cut emerald into a bag of broken beer bottles. Up to a point, everything in the bag tends to sparkle. No, the smaller builders choose the summer months as their showcase, their chance to display low-volume gems without undue distraction. Those are the bikes of summer.

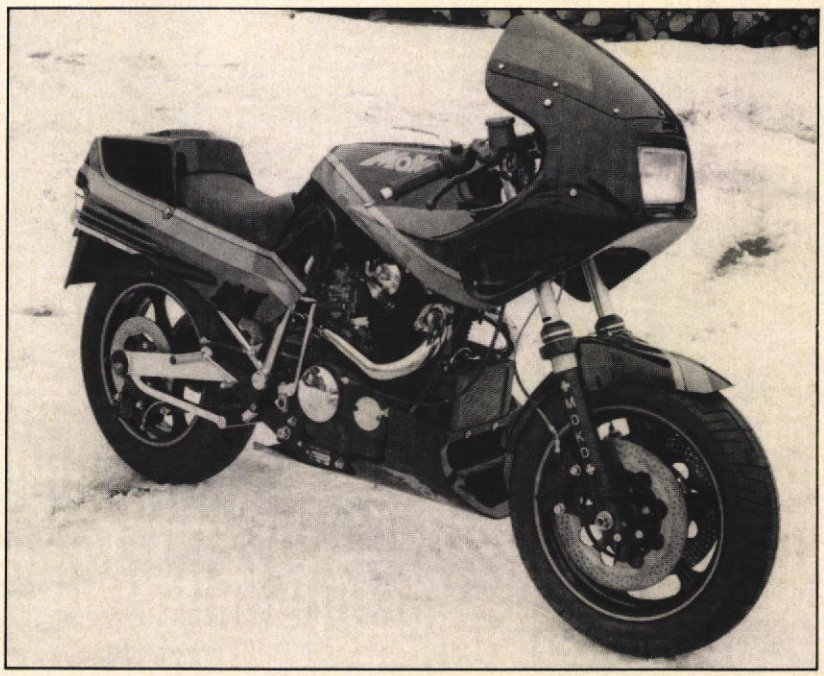
Clearly filling the pigeonhole of an exclusive, low-production machine is Alain Carre's latest in moto-fashion, the Axis 749. This is what happens when you give a Paris designer a Yamaha FZ750 and a free hand. Your eyes might linger on the bike's unconventional silhouette, its solid alloy wheels or even its remarkably brief fenders, but you'd be missing one salient point of the bike's appeal. Slim, slight and slinky as it appears, the Axis, replete with passenger pegs, is a two-up affair.

• Far more conventional—at least on the outside—are Swiss manufacturer Moko's vertical-twin sportbikes. The engines start as bog-standard Yamaha twins, but are built up by Gassner Racing Motors to Moko's particular specifications. The end result is the buyer's choice of a hotted-up 653cc version, a 75-hp 975cc motor or a 98-hp 1023cc engine. All of them have twin Dell'Ortos bolted on, and slip into Moko's single-shock chassis alongside Brembo brakes, Lockheed calipers and Moko's own fork assemblies.



Paris fashion has now produced the Axis 749, the latest Carre in the garage

Two-up, yes, but without taking a backseat to any motorcycle design.



Moko's 1023cc Yamaha-based twin is like a "conventional" Mokobike turned inside out

In a break with the bikebuilder's tradition, what's unusual is on the inside.

Continued

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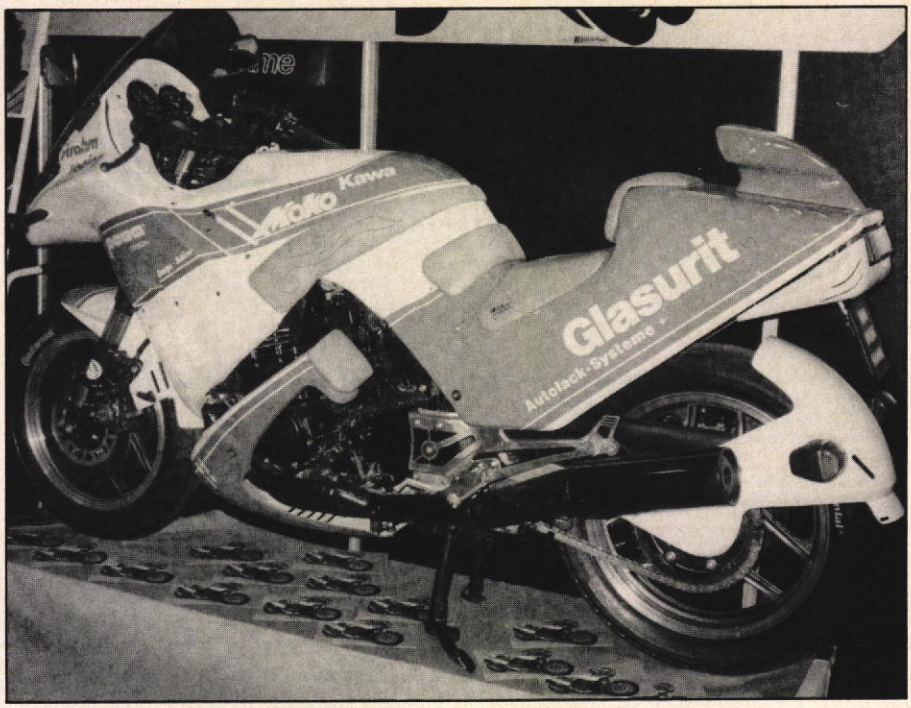
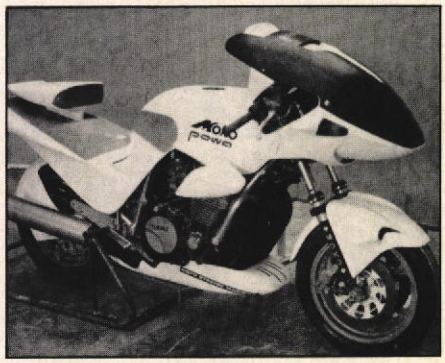


From pronounced beak to rear air scoop, Moko's latest GPz is almost archetypal

This, *knee-rests and all, is the stuff of Swiss flashbikes.*



Powa Yamaha: styling licks for every taste

And maximum design per square inch.

Gilera's electric-start 200 Fast Bike

Slicing neatly through moto-euphemism.

• A trifle heavier on the bizarre scale is Moko's treatment of a box-stock GPz Kawasaki. But after the Moko fiberglass team gets finished, from its minimal fenders to bellypan-mounted knee rests to pencil-point nose section, that GPz isn't run-of-the-mill any longer.

• From Moko it's only a hop, skip and a small conceptual jump to Powa's salon, which these days is fitting an 1100cc Yamaha motor into something just a bit unusual. Depending on your perspective, the end result might be a personal statement on two wheels or something that looks like it just arrived from the set of "The Jetsons." Or, given the bike's extended beard cowling, shark's mouth and eyes, a collision between Jaws and the Great Kahuna.

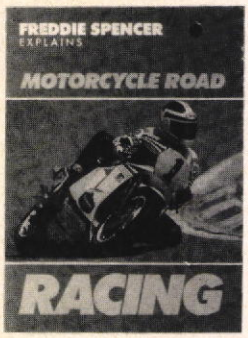
• Perhaps that's enough stylistic fiddle-faddle, however. Maybe you'd like something a little straighter from the shoulder. For that frame of mind, there's a new Gilera that not only puts a finer focus on the Rally-Tourer category, it neatly sidesteps the traditional pussyfooting moto-manufacturers have indulged in about outright performance. Granted, there have been Ninjas, Hurricanes, V-Maxes, Interceptors, even Eliminators, but those nameplates have been merely evocative of high performance. They never addressed it head-on, so to speak. And compared to this new Gilera, they sound as weak-kneed as moto-milquetoast. The name of this new bastion of the essence of performance? The Gilera 200 Fast Bike. Is it a bike? You bet. Is it fast? Sure, you saw it in print, didn't you?

FEDERAL CASES

• Much of the nation, especially the western sector, is already aglow with the freedom to travel at 65 mph on designated stretches of rural Interstates. That being the case, the over-

Continued

Fast Forward



"Freddie Spencer Explains Motorcycle Road Racing"
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• World-class fast guys see things a little differently from the rest of us. And when one of them offers to share his secrets for attaining the kind of speed that makes heroes out of mere mortals, we listen.

In the case of "Freddie Spencer Explains Motorcycle Road Racing," we watch as well. But what comes out isn't a compendium of cold, hard facts on racing technique from an acknowledged master. Rather, it's a loose commentary of slightly more than two minutes, with any facts being of the warm, soft variety. In fact, this production isn't a how-to on roadracing at all. Instead, it's an example of a relatively new genre: the coffee-table video.

All of which doesn't necessarily add up to a letdown—unless you had your heart set on Fast Freddie revealing all for the minicams. What qualifies the tape as coffee-table fodder is its broad-brush approach to motorcycle racing from the '30s on, coupled with some absolutely stunning camera work of Spencer, Mamola and Roberts doing what they do best. The result is the sort of program you could enjoy as a primer on motorcycle racing, even if you knew nothing about two-wheeled competition before you sat down.

If you *did* know one end of a roadracer from the other, however, you could appreciate the tape's insights into modern racebike design, as well as the smattering of race strategy—though not tactics—sprinkled throughout. In short, if you're in need of a video with a hard-core, insider's-only approach to racing, keep looking; this isn't it. If you can accept a lower-key presentation that also appeals to non-racers, slip "Freddie" into the VCR and just keep looking, period. —*Larry Works*

"Hype doesn't impress me; performance does."
Mrs. Jeanne Lourey

JEANNE LOUREY
NORRIDGEWOCK, MAINE
June, 1986

Mr. Robert Wehman
Spectro Oils of America

Dear Mr. Wehman:

I ride in a sidecar, ear-to-engine, beside a 1984 Honda Aspencade with 10,900 miles on it. From my position, the gears shifted with an alarming "thunk-clunk," and the normal engine noise sounded as if there were pieces of metal caught in the engine. Long rides were far from enjoyable, and driver-passenger conversation, even through an intercom, was almost impossible.

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My husband reports that the engine runs one bar cooler (on the bar-graph temperature indicator) and goes into neutral easily. In the past, getting into neutral had been an annoying problem. He can also talk to me--even without the intercom--and he likes that!

Be assured, we will spread the word to other sidescarists and their drivers. I never thought I'd write the kind of letter I see occasionally in your advertising. Hype doesn't impress me; performance does. You make an excellent product, and I enjoy long rides again. Thanks.

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RIDE/REPORT:

Yamaha TZR250

Superbikes get small.

• Forget displacement; it's unimportant. The TZR250 is every inch a Superbike, displacement or no, the pinnacle of 25 years of Yamaha's street-stroker know-how.

In attaining that pinnacle, the TZR250 takes the YDS/RD/LC series to the limit, and now nudges TZ-level specs at almost every point. The TZR incorporates the very best in equipment and finish, a Delta-Box chassis and, for the first time on a streetbike, 200-horsepower-per-liter engine performance. To top it off, from 20 yards back it even *looks* like a factory TZ.

That similarity extends beneath the flash bodywork, too. The TZR's liquid-cooled parallel twin is smaller than the old YPVS twin, and shares the 56.4mm x 50mm dimensions of Yamaha's latest TZs. Borrowed also is the direct crankcase induction, to improve throttle response and reduce high-rpm surging. The TZR's exhaust powervalve was refined as well, though not so much for increased mid-range as to provide a top-end rush.

At low revs, the TZR is a paragon of mild manners—and slow. Its real power comes in with a jolt at 7000 rpm, followed by a second dose of frenzy at 9000 rpm that can hurl the quarter-liter Yamaha past bikes three times its size. Due to conservatism in the porting and exhaust, the TZR runs out of steam just past 10 grand; that's a plus point, though, because few would tolerate the sub-1000-mile teardowns demanded by 12,000-plus revs.

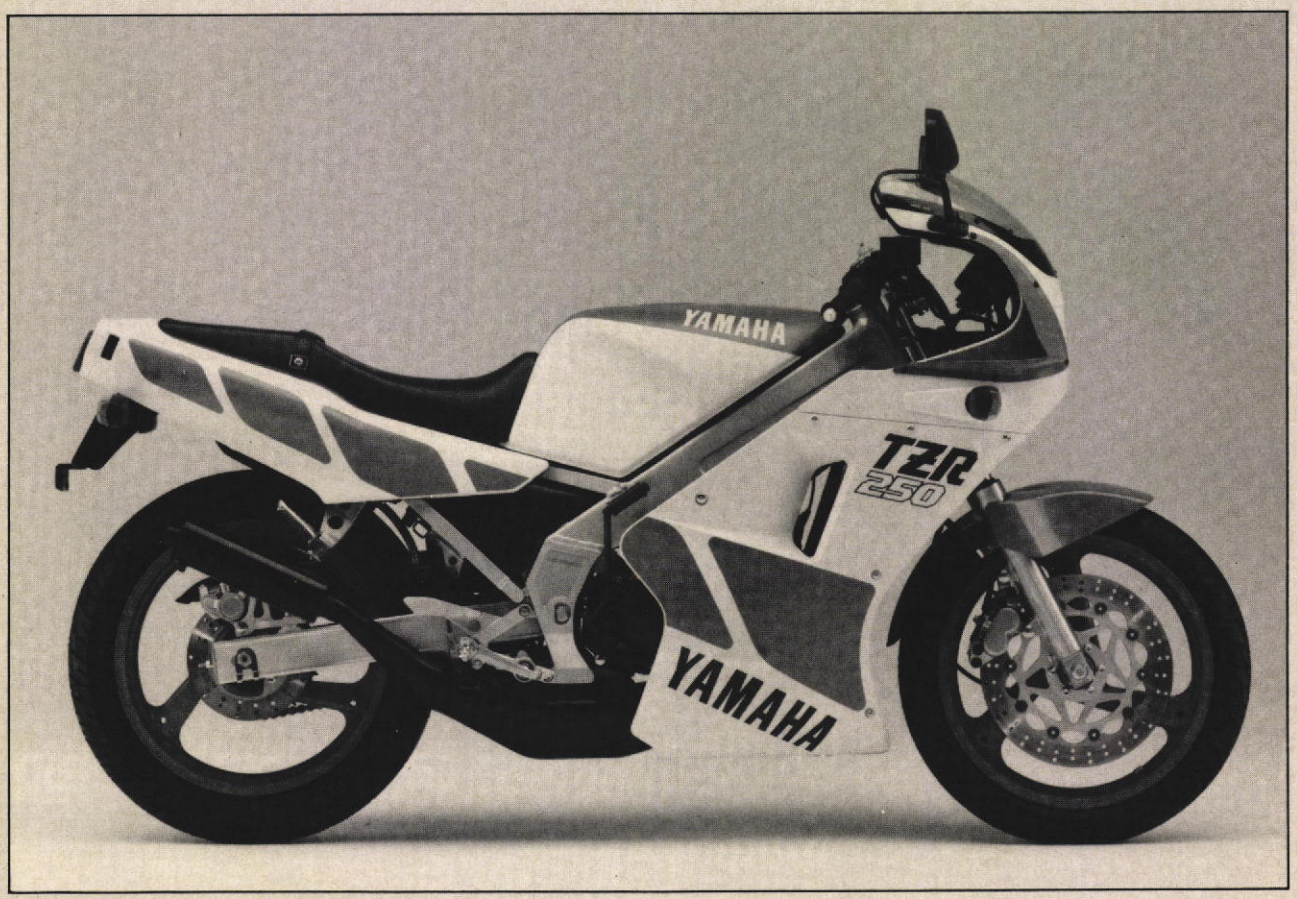
The TZR's somewhat peaky power characteristics sound unforgiving, but they're more than compensated for by the chassis. The aluminum Delta-Box looks massive, but its designers claim it's 40 percent lighter and 30 percent stronger than a comparable steel frame. Rear suspension is similar to a TZ's, a rising-rate system with a deCarbon-type damper and hefty aluminum swingarm. The stumpy 39mm fork uses "variable-damper" plumbing, which stiffens movement on full compression; even the bike's four-piston front caliper working on a huge 320mm disc doesn't faze them.

Such attention to chassis construction might seem overkill for a 250, but on the TZR it equates to simply the best handling and steering in *any* class. This bike gleefully accepts the most outrageous liberties of line, throttle and braking, seemingly without complaint. Rarely have high-speed stability and knife-edge steering been so well combined.

Some of the TZR's crisp handling can be traced to light weight, and in fact the TZR's claimed 277-pound dry weight makes it almost as spare as its racing counterpart. And almost as fast. The bike is capable of timed 121-mph top speeds, and has run quarter-miles in the low 13s. And last year, pulling nearly 130 mph with TT gearing, the TZR became the first production 250 to lap the Isle of Man at more than 100 mph.

Even so, the TZR mainly owes its existence to the oddities of the Japanese market. At almost $4000 (its price in Great Britain), the TZR likely will remain a rarity, even in those countries where it is available. All of which seems a pity. A sportbike this good should be standard equipment for every red-blooded pavement-scratcher.

—Mac McDiarmid



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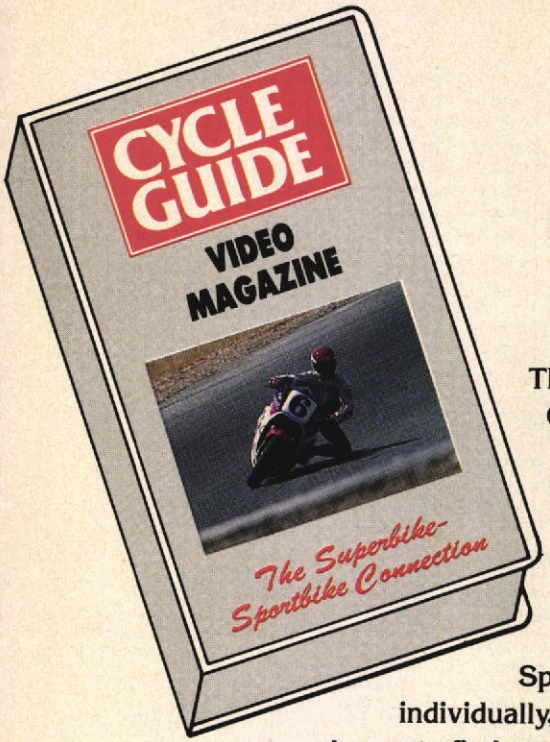

CYCLE GUIDE VIDEO MAGAZINE

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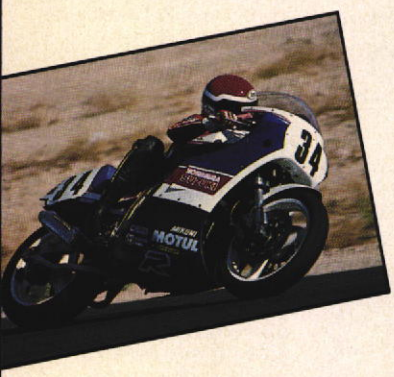
Experience the knee-dragging, pavement peeling action up close as they compare the stock street bikes from Yamaha, Honda, and Suzuki with the Superbike race-bikes on the track at Willow Springs Raceway.

Sportscaster Joe Buttitta interviews each of these great riders individually, asking the questions you'd ask if you were there. It's your chance to find out how your favorite stocker compares to the Superbikes—for handling, performance, and comfort— and the modifications necessary to make your bike perform like a Superbike.



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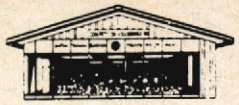

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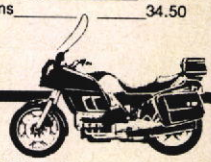

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ride of the presidential veto on funding for the Highway Bill undoubtedly will be remembered for returning partial control of speed limits to the discretion of individual states. But that's not the only effect the override had for motorcyclists.

Many states employ High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on crowded highways. Access to those lanes, which move more freely and are subject to reduced gridlock in rush hours, is open only to vehicles carrying a minimum number of passengers. Motorcycles, by definition and legal requirement, are more or less prohibited from carrying the HOV minimum number of passengers. As a result, they've been excluded from use of the lanes almost uniformly; the number of locations in this country where motorcycles legally can travel HOV lanes can be counted on the fingers of a single riding glove.

That's about to change. With the passage of the Highway Bill, any state that accepts federal funds for highway construction now must allow motorcycle access to HOV lanes, or must make a specific declaration that motorcycles are unsafe. Further, that declaration must be accepted by—and proved to—the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

• Unfortunately, passage of the Highway Bill brought with it an unforseen twist. States putting the limited 65-mph provision before their legislatures can expect that extreme positive public sentiment will make the measure likely to pass—and quickly. That also makes any 65-mph bill a likely target for riders, individual measures tacked on shortly before a vote. Like, for example, when Michigan put the 65 mph proposition before its legislators—with a ban on radar detectors added on. The measure, replete with ban, already has passed one of two houses of Michigan's legislature.

• Lest you start thinking that the U.S. exists in some kind of governmental vacuum, consider these two facts: First, speed limits on specified sections of Australian highway are scheduled to increase to 110 kph, a little over 68 mph. Second, at virtually the same time comes news that sections of Australia now ban the sale, ownership and use of radar detectors, with fines of up to $1500 or more for violations. Sound familiar?

• Such parallel occurrences might seem like mere coincidence or unbridled synchronicity, but it's far more likely simply a matter of give-and-take, the first principle of government. The respective governments make a show of abandoning an unpopular law that's already widely ignored, and in return gain something. That, anyway, goes some distance toward explaining why, while we're all watching the 65-mph signs in the government's left hand, the right hand writes new legislation: mandatory helmet laws.

The spate of new proposed legislation includes Texas SB144. The measure would, if enacted, require that all riders in that state wear helmets. Currently, only riders under 18 years of age are so required. This bill already has passed the Texas State Senate, and is slated to be heard by the House.

• Similarly, Illinois HB2, currently awaiting a final House vote, would require that all riders and passengers of motorcycles and mopeds in that state wear approved helmets.

• And in Washington, HB161, which has already passed that state's Transportation Committee and is currently under further review, would reinstate a mandatory helmet requirement for all riders there.

• By far, however, the reinstatement movement in California has proved to be the most colorful. The California State Assembly heard motorcycle showman/stuntman Evel Knievel defend the pro side, while some 150 Hell's Angels outside the Assembly building backed the con. The semipublic debate of the issue included every aspect of traditional arguments on the subject. Eventually, discussion boiled down to freedom-of-choice arguments vs. cost-to-the-public contentions of the legislators; representatives of the state argued that unhelmeted riders annually cost California $65 million. When the last voice died out, the vote went 10–4 in favor of mandatory

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helmet use. That count moved a California helmet law from that state's Transportation Committee to the Ways and Means Committee, one step closer to possible passage.

• Part of the impetus for renewed efforts at helmet legislation seems to be the so-far inseparable connection between helmet laws and seatbelt legislation. It seems that each state that requires seatbelt use in cars will also, eventually, make the attempt to specify headgear for motorcyclists. The latest legislative rage, however, apparently reverses the traditional automobile-to-motorcycle path for legislation. Reports from around the country are that one of the next major fronts in auto laws will be something motorcyclists have had to deal with for years: full-time, hard-wired headlights.

• Finally, in a move more specific to riders—touring riders, to be exact—Bridgestone (U.S.A.) Inc. recently announced a voluntary recall of its Spitfire S55 Touring Radial motorcycle tire. Bridgestone officials notified the NHTSA of the voluntary recall, which they termed a "precautionary measure." According to reports, no accidents have been caused by the tire, but the S55 is suspected of causing problems of wandering under extreme loads at high speeds. Currently, Bridgestone is retesting the Spitfire S55-series tires to determine the nature and extent of the problem.

HARD CASH

• Someone at Harley-Davidson is working hard to generate favorable headlines, both in and out of the motorcycle press. The latest round of H-D display type concerns President Reagan's quotations from the steps of Harley's York, Pennsylvania, assembly plant. "American workers don't need to hide from anyone," Reagan said, citing Harley's March request to the International Trade Commission to drop the final year of protective tariffs applied to large-capacity foreign motorcycles. The president went on to promote executive discretion in applying trade sanctions, and said that limited trade tariffs and quotas can be more productive than mandatory embargoes and taxes against countries with large trade surpluses with the U.S. And so, the Milwaukee-based Harley-Davidson Motor Co. became a textbook example of moderation in trade protection, as Reagan sought to rally public sentiment against recent House-approved tighter trade legislation.

• Elsewhere on the financial pages, Harley turned up again, this time with a new stock issue. Harley-Davidson, Inc. reportedly has filed a statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission of a public offering of 2 million shares of common stock; 1,140,000 shares are offered by the company, with 860,000 offered by stockholders. All of which might mean that for some of us it's time to invest in hog futures.

Continued

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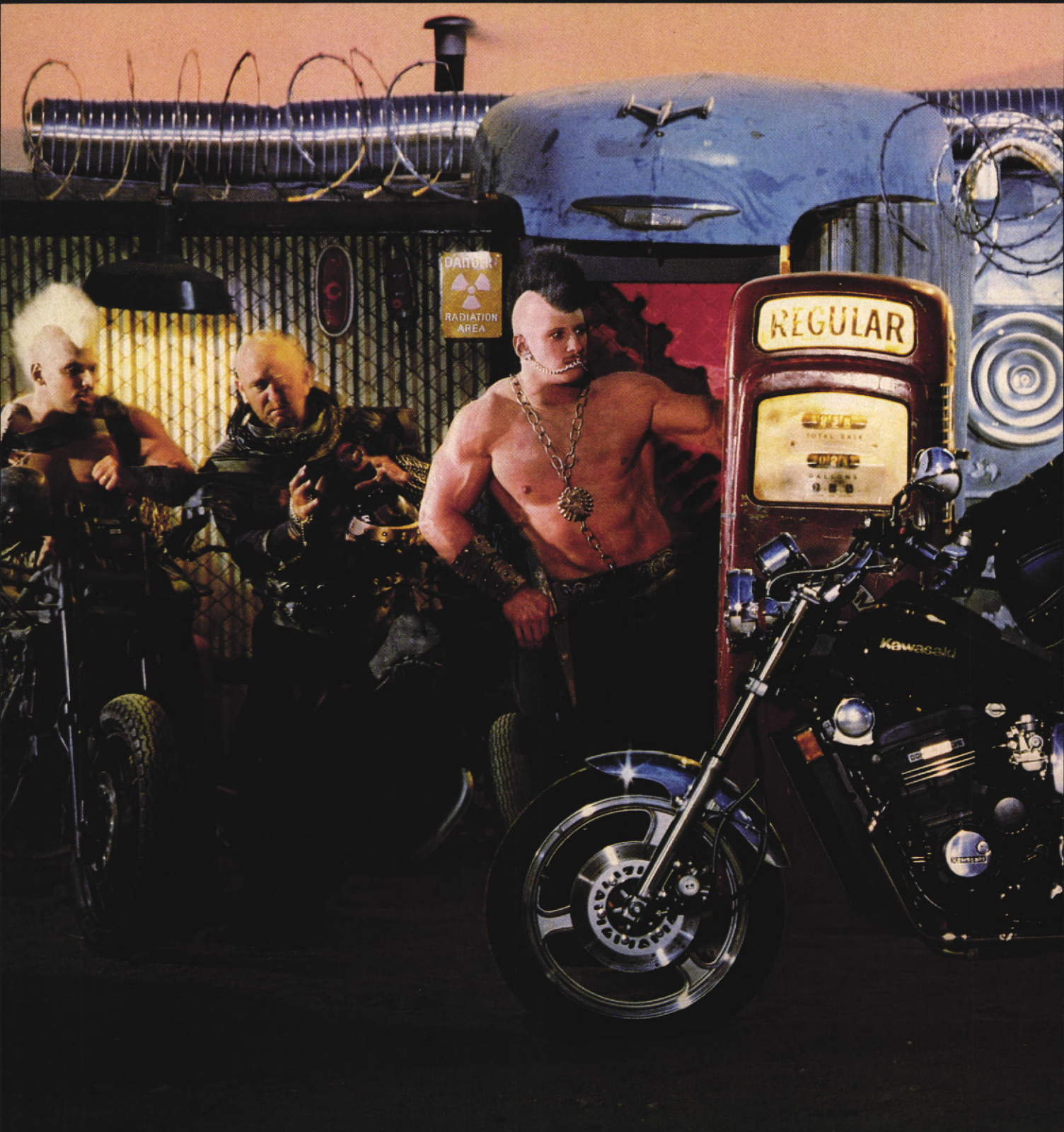

It is written that the meek shall inherit the earth. It fails to say, however, just how long they'll hang on to the roads. Or if.

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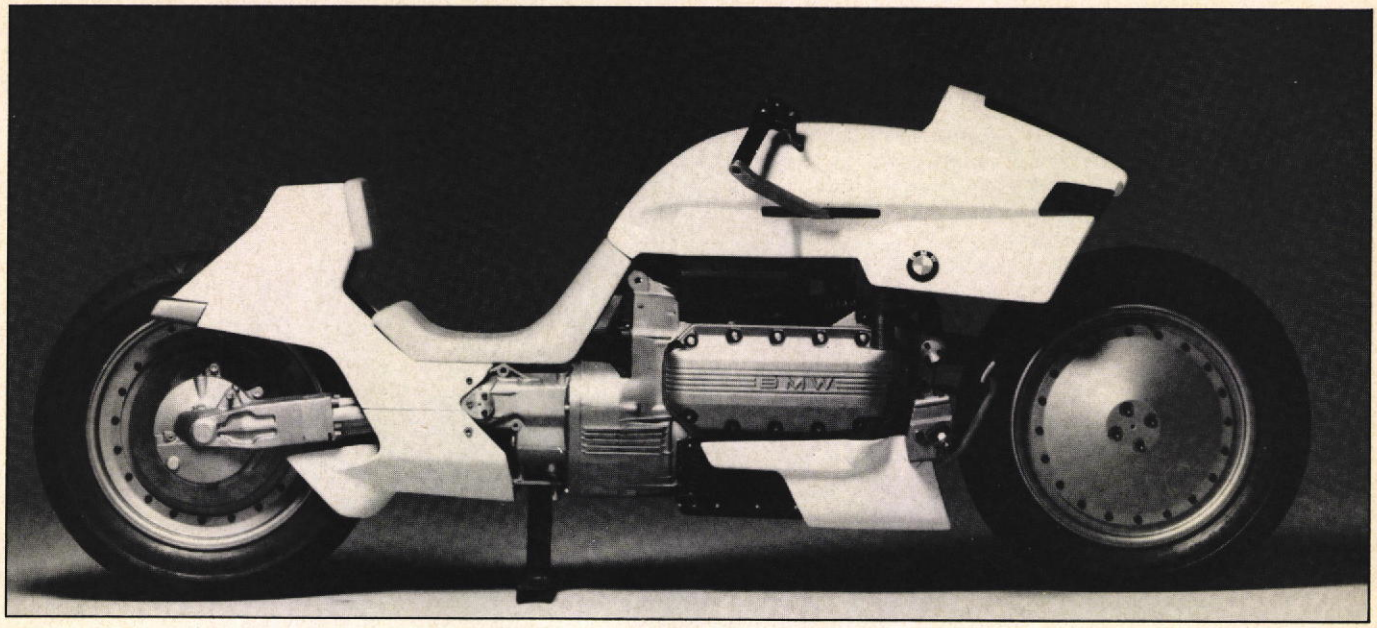
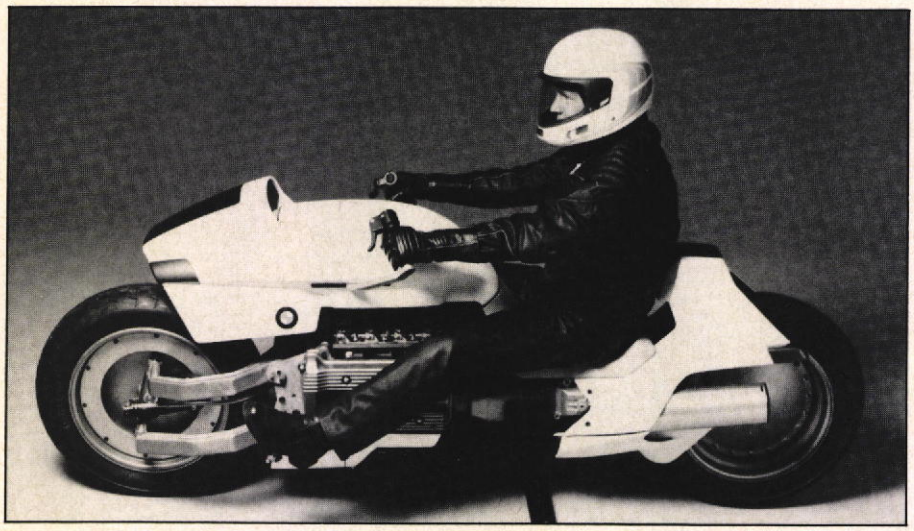




BMW's latest showbike is more than slightly sleight-of-hand

A standard bit of bit moto-legerdemain: a case of now you see it—now you won't.

RUMORS

• First in the rumor mill's output this month is a short production run. Short, because the rumor was barely circulated before it was dealt with. First came the news that BMW would hit the '88 show circuit with the high-style monoposto machine you see here, news that naturally produced talk that the K100-based device, in this form or something slightly less radical, would be unveiled as production hardware sometime soon. As rumors go, it was enticing, and BMW spokesmen admitted the machine was built with factory-supplied parts and technical assistance. That news doesn't, however, necessarily add up to a factory design effort. That help was given to a 26-year-old German design student, the latest in a long line of dewy-eyed moto-idealists to draw up a long, low two-wheeler that the factories won't be building—at least, not yet.

• Far more likely to see the end of an assembly line is the subject of some attractive gossip concerning Cagiva's Paso series for 1988. That series, we're now told, will not be the 750 and 350 you've already seen. Instead, sources swear, previous speculation about Moto-Morini engines in Cagiva frames will pan out in the form of an extended family of Pasos. Two separate conduits have reported similar stories, differing only in the fine details. Both accounts confirm quarter- and half-liter vee-twin Pasos, and both tales mention a larger family member as well. In one version, the big brother is a 750, in the other it's a 900, but in both accounts the engine in the largest Paso isn't directly related to the desmodromically valved 748cc vee-twin that powers the current Paso 750.

• Oddly enough, if the Cagiva/Ducati/Morini item becomes a production reality, it's likely to run head-on into another rumor about Moto Guzzi. A current item of faith among Continental gossip channels is that the much-mentioned Guzzi vee-four will be behind curtain number three at the next Milan Show. Well, all things are possible, but if the current incarnation of whispers wafting across the Atlantic is to be believed, what's behind that curtain is a new vee-twin sportbike series that runs the displacement gamut from 350cc–1000cc. And the topping of this particular confection includes mention of belt-driven SOHC, four valves per cylinder and shaft drive.

• Still, by some accounts what should be interesting at the European Shows next time around isn't necessarily what's there but what isn't. And what isn't, so the story goes, is a GSX-R1100. Overseas reports are that production of the 1100 has been halted for some time. Instead, we've heard, a newer, lighter, quicker GSX-R*1000*, along with a new 750, will be unveiled at the next Paris Show.

• Just around the corner from the new Suzukis at Paris should be a new vee-twin Tenere from Yamaha—at least, that's the latest image in several crystal balls. It doesn't take much effort to conjecture that a genuine Paris-Dakar version of the bike isn't far off, either.

• Apparently, the same thinking that built the vee-twin Tenere out of thin air has fueled discussion of a new KTM twin also intended for the African desert. As this story unfolds, KTM's in-house engineers place the peak engine displacement of a single at around 610cc, which they also deem insufficient for a P-D bike with any real chance of winning. The answer, then, is a twin. A further wrinkle in the unfolding suggests that this twin will be a 750, and that off-road or dual-purpose applications won't be its only intended use.

• Another tale of the African outback includes

Continued

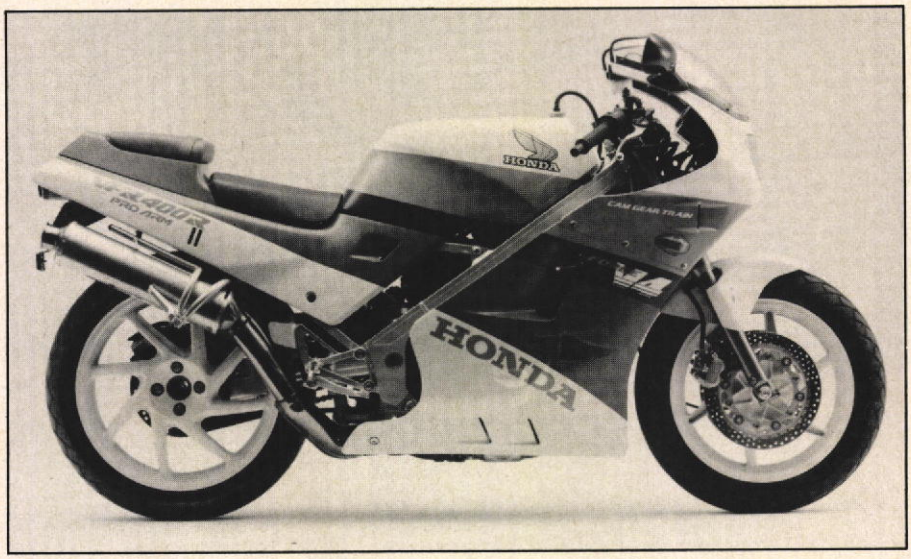
repeated mention that one of the majors will be putting its best foot forward in the next P-D Rally with something entirely different in off-road machines. Take it or leave it, the talk is that some unfortunate factory pilot will be riding an experimental recumbent machine across what the factory hopes is the full distance of the Paris-Dakar Rally. A few attendant details include a pair of hydraulic sidestands and hydraulic hub-center steering, just what's needed to provide that all-important measure of sand-hugging weight.

• OK, OK, it sounds just too bizarre to be true, but stranger things have happened. Take, for instance, the recurrent surfacing of an idle bit of flotsam about a new six-cylinder Gold Wing. This tidbit, which has been making the rounds for several months in a variety of different displacements, has currently settled on the 1400cc–1500cc range. And the truth of this item, we're told, will be apparent in all its enormous glory by late September.

• The same wild-eyed sources whispering nervously about flat-six Hondas have dropped one more on the cold granite slab of the rumor mill's front stairs. They say that Honda's recent unveiling of an NR750, a bike that has no apparent reason for being, soon will have one. If you can believe what some race-watchers are saying, Honda will build a quantity of NRs sufficient to ensure homologation for Superbike racing.

AFTER THE FACT

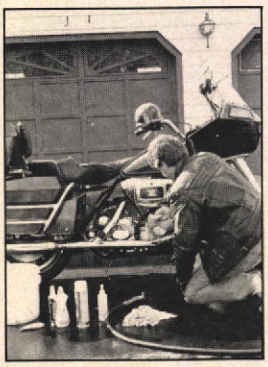
• You remember that old saw about Honda following BMW's lead by building a streetbike with a single-sided swingarm? Sure you do. It was in the Rumors column more than one year ago, and has periodically popped up since then, firming up all the while. Finally, the June-issue rumors coverage predicted Honda would sell a one-armed bandit by 1988, no ifs, ands or buts. The proof of that particular contention you see here in unequivocal black



Honda's VFR400R one-armed bandit has been predicted here for more than one year

Advance copy on a page lifted from BMW's book?

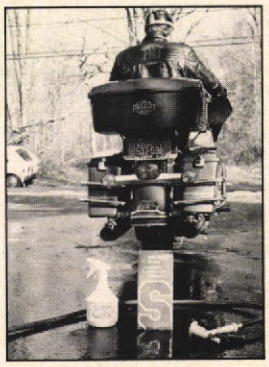
OF COURSE YOU CAN GET IT FILTHY IN MINUTES. BUT CAN YOU GET IT CLEAN IN MINUTES?



Before S100. Rob Douglas still cleaning after 15 minutes!

There's really no trick at all to getting your cycle filthy. One rain ride, a little oil seepage, a dusty trail, or any old MX course will do just fine. Question is, how can you get it clean without lousing up half your hard earned Saturday? Answer: S100, the incredible spray on, hose off Total Cycle Cleaner. With just S100 and a garden hose, you can get back to riding on a Saturday faster than you ever dreamed. And S100 is kind to all those sensitive surfaces you worry about with petroleum degreasers, like plastic, alloy, rubber, paint, even bearings and O-ring chains.

But you don't have to believe a word we say about S100, because some of the real pros of the cycle business have tested S100 and use it to clean their cycles. Folks like *Rider Magazine's* Mark Tuttle who called S100 a product that's "...likely to revolutionize the Saturday morning wash" or G.W.R.R.A.'s *Wing World* Magazine "...my bike is clean in places it never knew it was supposed to be clean...". Recently, the largest cycle magazine in the industry reported "...nothing we have tried cuts through road grime quicker or more thoroughly...". S100 is even factory approved by America's famous cycle maker! S100 comes in a couple of convenient sizes. The original kit with sprayer and the economical refill bottle.



With S100. Rob Douglas riding away after 15 minutes!

So if you think riding your machine is a better way to spend your Saturday than cleaning it, ask your dealer about S100. It's available at Harley Davidson dealers and many other fine cycle shops throughout the USA and Canada. If your dealer doesn't stock S100, please ask him to contact us for the name of his nearest distributor. (Chances are he'll thank you. He doesn't like cleaning filthy cycles any more than you do!)

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and white, in the form of a domestic-market "Pro Arm" VFR400R. The time required to yank the rear wheel is no more than what's needed to remove four bolts; the chain, rear sprocket and rear disc remain in place.

Now, some contentious souls even swear that Honda, whose designers often have known a good thing when they see it, will go so far as to apply Pro Arm technology to other streetbikes, and not solely those intended for Japanese sale.

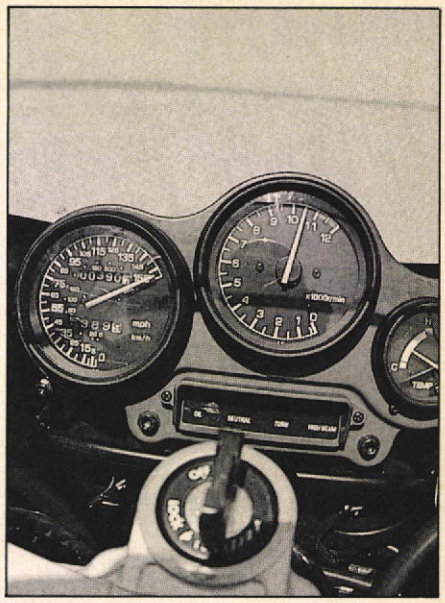
• In another update on a June-issue item, our Ride Report on the CBR750 speculated on whether the domestic-version inline-four would replace Honda's VFR750 for worldwide distribution, or if the vee-four would be revamped for 1988. The jury's still out on whether CBRs will be crated for export, but apparently part of the question has been answered. Well-placed sources in Japan report a considerably hotter R-series VFR750 will be made public for the first time in early autumn—for those who didn't already read about it here.

• And as a follow-up to another rumor that you might have read in almost any CYCLE GUIDE over the past few years, current factory figures from Norton reportedly show the firm's plans to make its Rotary available to the public are taking shape. Latest reports from our men observing Norton's progress are that production of the Rotary has quadrupled in recent months. Does this mean it's time for you to start clearing a Rotary-shaped space in your garage? Maybe not. Even with its four-fold production, total output of Wankel-powered Nortons is said to be less than 500 machines per year.

• Nearly 50 overland expeditions have attempted to reach the North Pole in modern times. A mere 13 of them made it all the way. One of them was by motorcycle. Shinji Kazama, motojournalist, Paris-Dakar competitor, adventurer, reached the Pole 44 days and 4860 miles after leaving from Ward Hunt Island. The bike he rode, as mentioned in an Apart From The Crowd item two months back, was a highly modified Yamaha TW250. The machine, with tires, bodywork and fluids designed expressly to handle the minus-50-degree temperatures the expedition encountered, is clearly one of a kind. So is the rider.

• One of the problems with being the quickest and fastest is sometimes you end up leaving the line a shade early. That was the case with dragstrip results of the Quickest and Fastest comparison last month; they left a little early and were picked up from the wrong source. Instead of what was printed, those results should have looked like this:

Suzuki GSX-R1100	10.503/128.20 mph
Yamaha FZR1100	10.557/129.87 mph
Honda Hurricane 1000	10.703/128.02 mph
Kawasaki Ninja 1000R	10.793/126.40 mph



• Jumping the gun is a possibility, too, when covering legal action, because a higher court can reverse a lower court's decision. And that's more or less what happened in the case of Rich-

Continued

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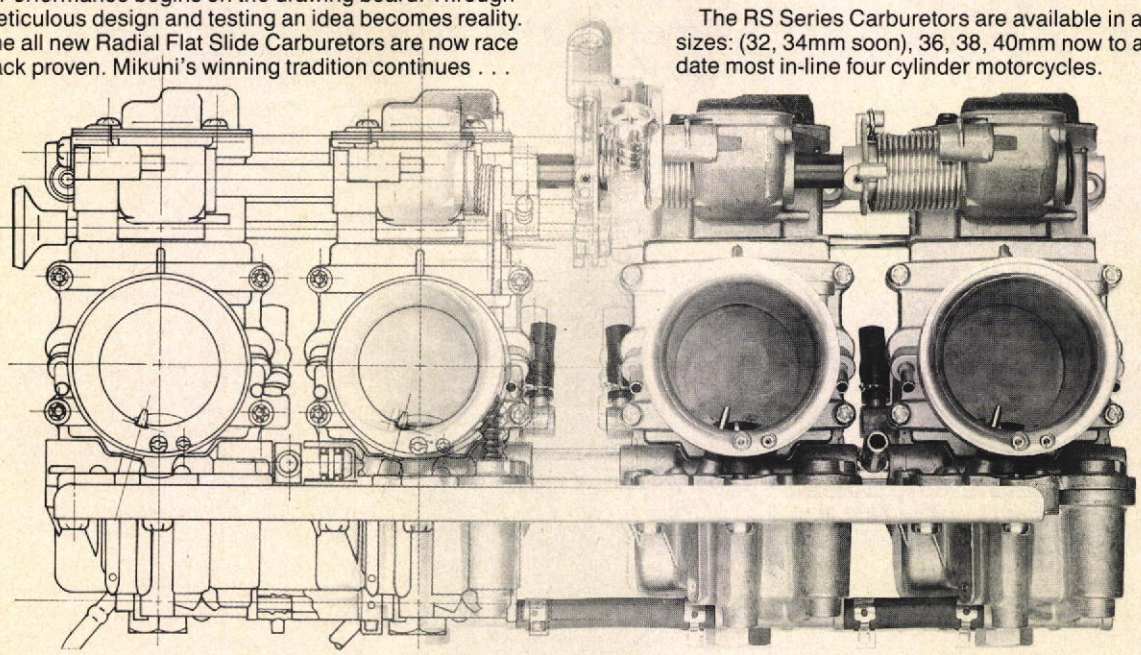

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ardson vs. Suzuki (Federal Cases, July issue). Federal Judge William P. Gray reportedly has issued a court order reducing a jury award of $6 million to inventor Donald Richardson to a maximum potential award of approximately $190,000. Gray reportedly also vacated jury awards to Richardson made on the basis of fraud, royalties on trade secrets and punitive damages. Does that mean the case, which concerns Suzuki's Full Floater rear suspension, is settled? Hardly; Suzuki's attorneys have said they expect Richardson to appeal the decision.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• There are those who view production machines as incomplete, mere stepping stones on the way to some natural conclusion. That, apparently, is the viewpoint of the son of Art Arfons, the designer of the jet-powered Green Monster, uh, automobile. He's followed in his father's tire tracks by wrenching up something you don't see every day. It's a little something special by way of a Suzuki Quadracer—one with a built-in 1500 horsepower provided by a GE jet engine. And this one, we're told, can handle double-jumps effortlessly.

• While a top-gun Quadracer is certainly one for the books, it isn't necessarily one for the Guinnees Book of Records. And that tome, of late, seems the final resting place for scads of motorcycle-related efforts. None, however, have quite the flavor of a recent stunt that will shortly find its way into the pages of that volume. The "motorcycle-related" aspect comes via an FJ1200, which passed through the timing lights at a German racetrack at a hair over 157 mph, setting the record. Now, 157 mph, while certainly no average Sunday cruise for most of us, isn't exactly record-setting in and of itself. The trick is when the bike that sets the record does so towing a roller skater.

• Yet, even stranger things happen without setups, timing lights or watchful Guinness officials. One of them happened to a German motorcyclist in the process of ferrying his bike to the Isle of Man. With his bike in the hold, he deemed it the better part of prudence to unhitch his saddlebags and take them topside. Then, while he napped on a deckchair, he chained one of the cases to some handy railing, which to him seemed quite reasonable. To the boat's crew, however, it seemed highly suspicious. Fearing the case contined explosives, crew members cut the chain and gave the bag—reportedly containing travel documents, money, camera and clothes—a quick trip to Davy Jones' locker. Then, to add insult to injury, the ferry line reportedly refused to honor the rider's claim for damages, on the grounds that the luggage was unattended. All of which adds to new meaning to the phrase, "You can't take it with you." Apparently you can't, even when it's chained down. •

ENDURO TEST:

BY DAVID DEWHURST

Honda CR500 vs. Husqvarna 430WR

Can you train a caged gorilla to be a mountain lion?

There can only be one king of the jungle. He's the fittest, strongest and most agile one of the pack. The king rules because he can outpace everything else in the dark green world beneath the trees. And in that environment, Husky's 430WR is *the* enduro king.

Like all leaders, the 430WR doesn't have life easy. Every day it has to prove its supremacy. Usually it's no problem, and the Husky can cast aside the most promising of pretenders to the enduro crown. But once in a while there's a mechanical roar that sends shivers up everyone's spine, including the king's. *Continued*

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1987 DAVID DEWHURST

An enduro-kitted Honda CR500 produces just such a mechanical roar, and its bright-red appearance only adds to its menacing presence. You won't, however, find this enduro CR lurking in any Honda showroom. You have to search Honda's accessory catalog to find the wide-ratio five-speed transmission and the 24-watt lighting coils that turn the double-jump wonder into an honest-to-God enduro terror.

But the open-class Husky has faced these modified motocrossers before, and while they usually display plenty of muscle, they lack the agility and smoothness that keeps the king in command of his domain. But this is no backyard conversion; with the full backing of Honda the challenge seems serious, enough so to give the people at Husky pause.

A couple of fouled plugs and a flooded motor show that the Husky is vulnerable to the challenge, but leaner jetting and a new plug get things underway cleanly. Even still, the WR is still a little shaky, probably due to an imperfectly balanced crank. Whatever the reason, the vibration is hardly noticeable once the WR is rolling. What's noticeable instead is the wonderfully tractable way the Husky delivers power. Like the 250 motor of enduro riders' dreams, the 430 has a torquey low-speed punch that blends seamlessly into a top-end rush that scoots the WR through the woods at speeds befitting a king. There's no unexpected rush of power or wild spinning of wheels; instead, the Husky rushes headlong into battle with a commendable display of restraint.

The Husky's even stronger this year because it now has the 3.5mm larger 86mm bore from the 430 Auto. Husky claims the jump from a 400 was to help compensate for a quieter, and more restrictive, silencer and spark arrestor. In fact, the displacement increase is over-compensation, and the quieter 430 definitely ends up packing a healthier horsepower punch.

The Honda, too, has the power to rule, but it uses brute force, rather than subtlety to make its point. Even with an additional cylinder-head gasket to mellow things out our test bike, the stock CR motor kicks the dirt with size-12 combat boots. Unleashed, the Honda motor streaks toward its rev limit like an Exocet missile. Nothing can stop it. There's not a hill in the woods that can even slow the CR500—unless, of

course, it runs out of traction. And while that bottomless reserve of power seems nice out in the open, it soon becomes a liability in the jungle. Every narrow trail becomes a streaky blur, and the trees seem to close in menacingly. Just keeping on the straight and narrow demands caution with the throttle and a lot of respect for the challenger's power.

With so much power on hand it's hard to imagine that gearing would be critical, but the Honda's $210 accessory gear ratios do help. First and second are unchanged from the stock MX gearing, while third through fifth are taller. Coupled with a two-tooth larger rear-wheel sprocket, the CR's new transmission has a ratio for almost anything the woods have to offer. Whether it's a rocky stream or a fast fire road, the Honda never gets caught with its powerband down. This killer powerband is a definite advantage in the CR's native motocross world and it definitely puts some hair back into hare scrambles, but it's a little too much in the woods, even for wilder riders.

But what the Husky gives up in horsepower to the Honda it makes up in sheer agility. For a start, with its skinny new tank and narrow radiators, the 430WR feels like a 250. Even the controls have a smaller-bike feel, despite the addition of a stronger and larger diameter clutch to handle the extra power. The front brake, too, has a lighter feel than on previous WRs, now that Husqvarna fitted a twin-piston caliper up front. And what all this means on the trail is that the Husky never intrudes. As it flicks regally from turn to turn, the 430 is like white noise—always there but never noticed.

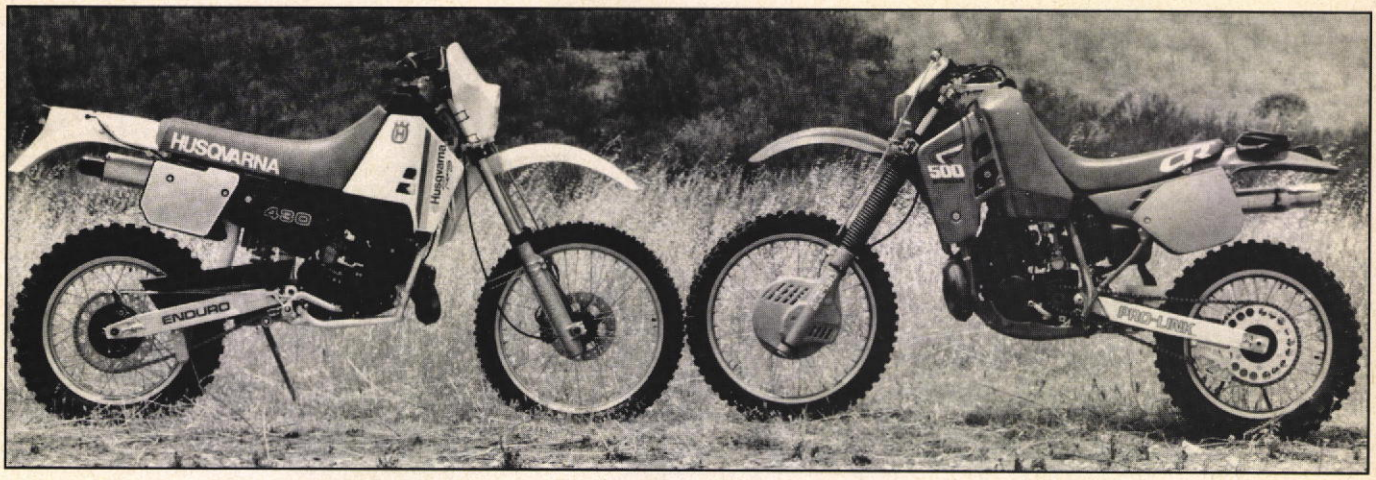
The Husky suspension also works unobtrusively, with little protest and without upsetting the rider. The 430's revised geometry makes the Ohlins-equipped rear suspension even plusher than ever. In addition, the fork now comes stock with last year's optional damper rod and spring, which helps a lot. But things still are not perfect. While the fork sucks up almost everything, it does have a slightly harsh feel at low speed, and its high-speed limits are not hard to find.

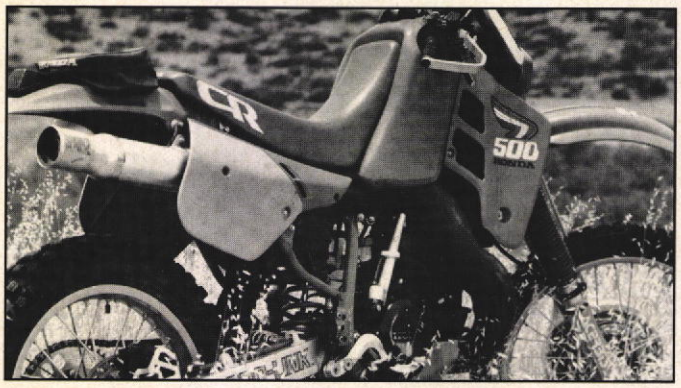
The Husky fork would probably go unnoticed if the plush front end of the Honda were not along for comparison. The enduro-equipped CR floats over roots and ruts and keeps its feet firmly planted without transmitting so much as a wiggle to the bars.

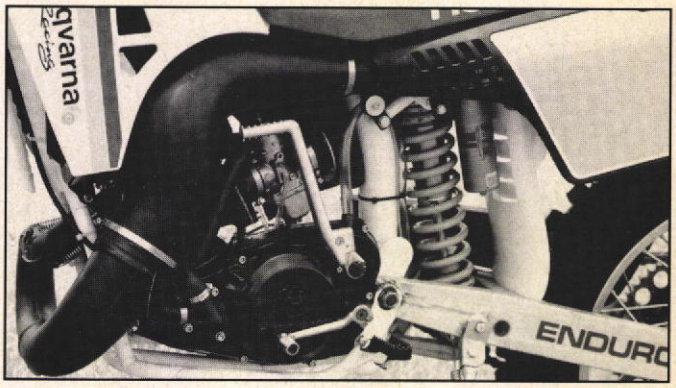
Everything else about the Honda is a little less subtle, though. The bulging 3.8 gallon IMS gas tank on our test bike is better suited to a cross country tour than a ride in the woods. And don't expect the optional lighting coil—which costs $10 for each of the 24 watts it generates—to shed much light deep in the woods. Hooked up to a 35-watt bulb in an XR250 light/number plate, it barely manages an enduro-legal glow. It's also hard to imagine criticizing Honda's normally excellent disc brakes, but in this low-speed application the rear binder becomes a little grabby. A locked rear wheel and a stalled motor are part of the CR's backwoods fighting technique.

In addition to these mechanical shortcomings, the CR has one major disadvantage—one that used to be the sole domain of the Swedish bike: It's expensive. Just bringing the CR up to the equipment level of the 430 will add at least $700 dollars to Honda's $2998 sticker price. Our test bike—complete with Honda Digital Enduro meter, XR toolbag, Sparky spark arrestor, longer '84 XR500 front brake hose and XR200 taillight—will probably tally close to $4300.

That's a lot of money to pay for a motocrosser that, like so many racers before it, can't topple the 430 Husky from its enduro throne. For a first attempt, the enduro-kitted CR500 is an impressive effort, but it's a close-but-no-cigar attempt. Think of it as a prince waiting for the king to falter. ●







	HONDA CR500 ENDURO	HUSQVARNA 430 ENDURO
Importer:	American Honda Motor Co. Inc., 100 W. Alondra Ave., Gardena, California 90247	Cagiva North America, Inc., 700 W. 190th St., Torrance, California 90248
Category	Enduro	Enduro
Suggested retail price	$4300 approx. as tested	$3435
Engine type	two-stroke vertical single	two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one reed-valve controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one bridged exhaust	one reed-valve controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one main exhaust
Bore and stroke	89.0mm x 79.0mm	86.0mm x 74.0mm
Displacement	491.5cc	429.9cc
Compression ratio	6.5:1 (approx. corrected)	12.6:1 (uncorrected)
Carburetion	one 38mm flat-slide Keihin slide/needle	one 38mm Mikuni slide/needle
Gearbox	5-speed	6-speed
Front suspension/wheel travel	Showa air-spring, 43mm stanchion tube diameter/10.6 in. (259mm)	Husqvarna air-spring, 40mm stanchion tube diameter/10.7 in. (272mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	Showa, 16-position adjustable compression damping, 4-position adjustable rebound damping, 30mm spring preload/11.0 in. (280mm)	Ohlins, 22-position adjustable compression damping, 40-position adjustable rebound damping, 19mm spring preload/10.3 in. (261mm)
Weight	247 lbs. (112.0kg)	245 lbs. (111.1kg)
Wheelbase	58.8 to 60.6 in. (1494 to 1540mm)	58.0 to 59.4 in. (1475 to 1510mm)
Seat height	36.9 in. (937mm)	37.4 in. (950mm)
Steering head angle	27.5 degrees from vertical	27.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.49 in. (114mm)	4.72 in. (120mm)
Fuel capacity	3.8 gal. (14.5/)	3.3 gal. (12.5/)
Warranty	90 days	30 days on engine and frame only
Available color	red only	white only

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THE NEW BMW K75S.

There often seem to be two kinds of motorcycles in the world: those meant for stroking adolescent fantasies and BMW's.

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* See warranty at your authorized BMW motorcycle dealer for details. ** Manufacturer's suggested retail prices. Actual prices will depend on dealer. © 1987 BMW of North America, Inc. The BMW trademark and

exterior decoration, the BMW K75S offers a wind tunnel-tested fairing that greatly reduces front axle lift and significantly increases weather protection.

What's more, like all BMW's, it offers extraordinary durability, underwritten by one of the most durable warranties in motorcycling: 3 years and unlimited miles.*

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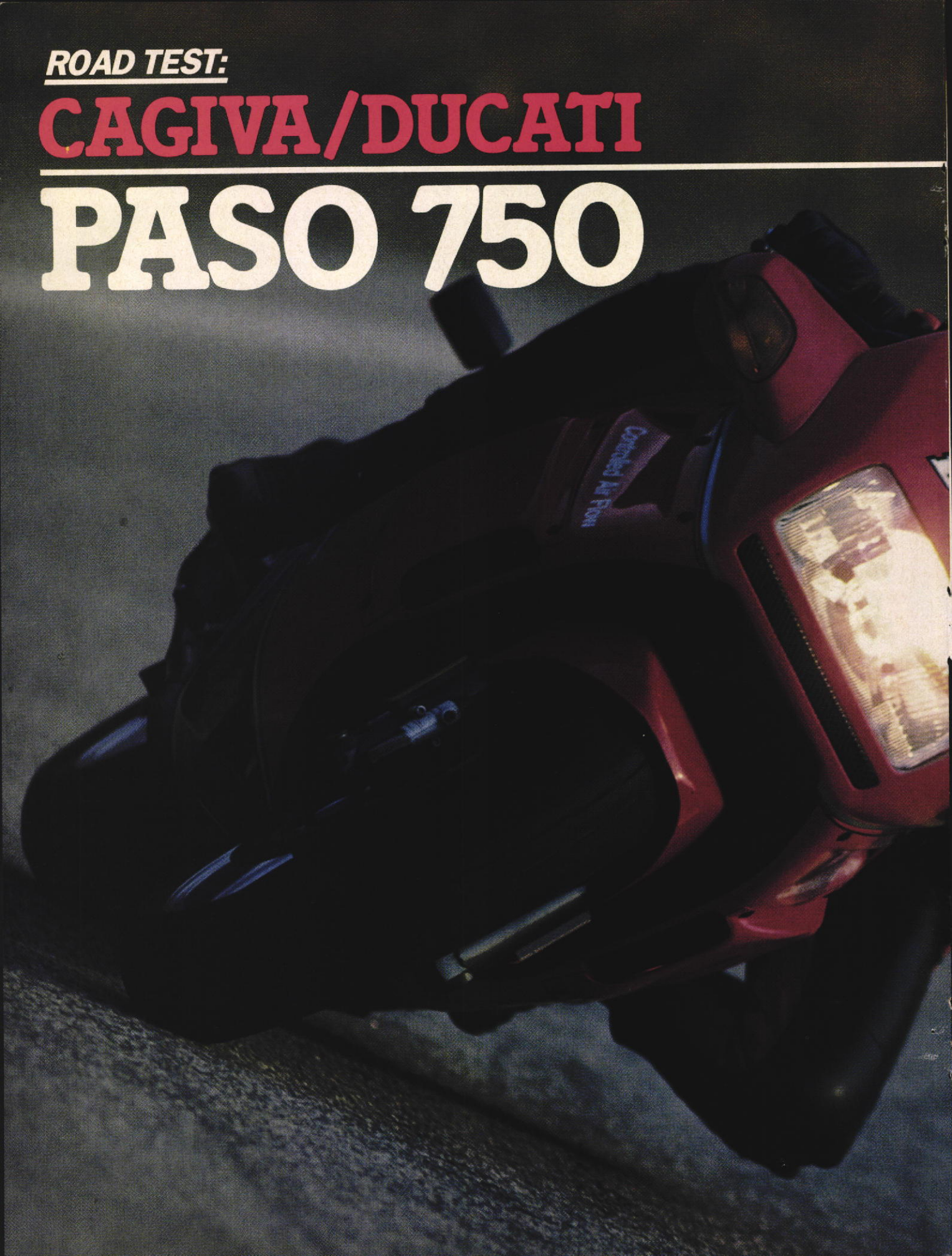
ROAD TEST:

CAGIVA/DUCATI

PASO 750



Not just another pretty face.

BY MARC COOK

Look into the Paso's Ferrari-red paint or gaze along its rakish lines and it's easy to imagine generations of impassioned designers striving for just the right look, imbuing the machine with the unmistakable cues that leave absolutely no question as to its national origin. The motorcycle is not merely a machine; it is *art.* Cagiva's flagship fits into this mold well: First impressions tell you that styling is one of the Paso's strong suits, and the machine draws crowds faster than an open armored car. The Paso very much has *the look.*

Yet while Cagiva rightly is proud of the Paso's stylish apparel, the firm is even more enthusiastic about what's under the finely cut suit. That's because Cagiva maintained loftier goals for the Paso than being a rolling piece of artwork. In fact, the decree came down early in the Paso's life: This motorcycle will match function with form and stand fender-to-fender with the 750-class machinery from all over the world. Strong words, indeed, considering the high caliber of machinery the Paso faces, but it leaves little doubt that Cagiva doesn't want the Paso dismissed as "just another Italian flashbike."

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PHOTOGRAPHY © 1987 DAVID DEWHURST

PASO 750

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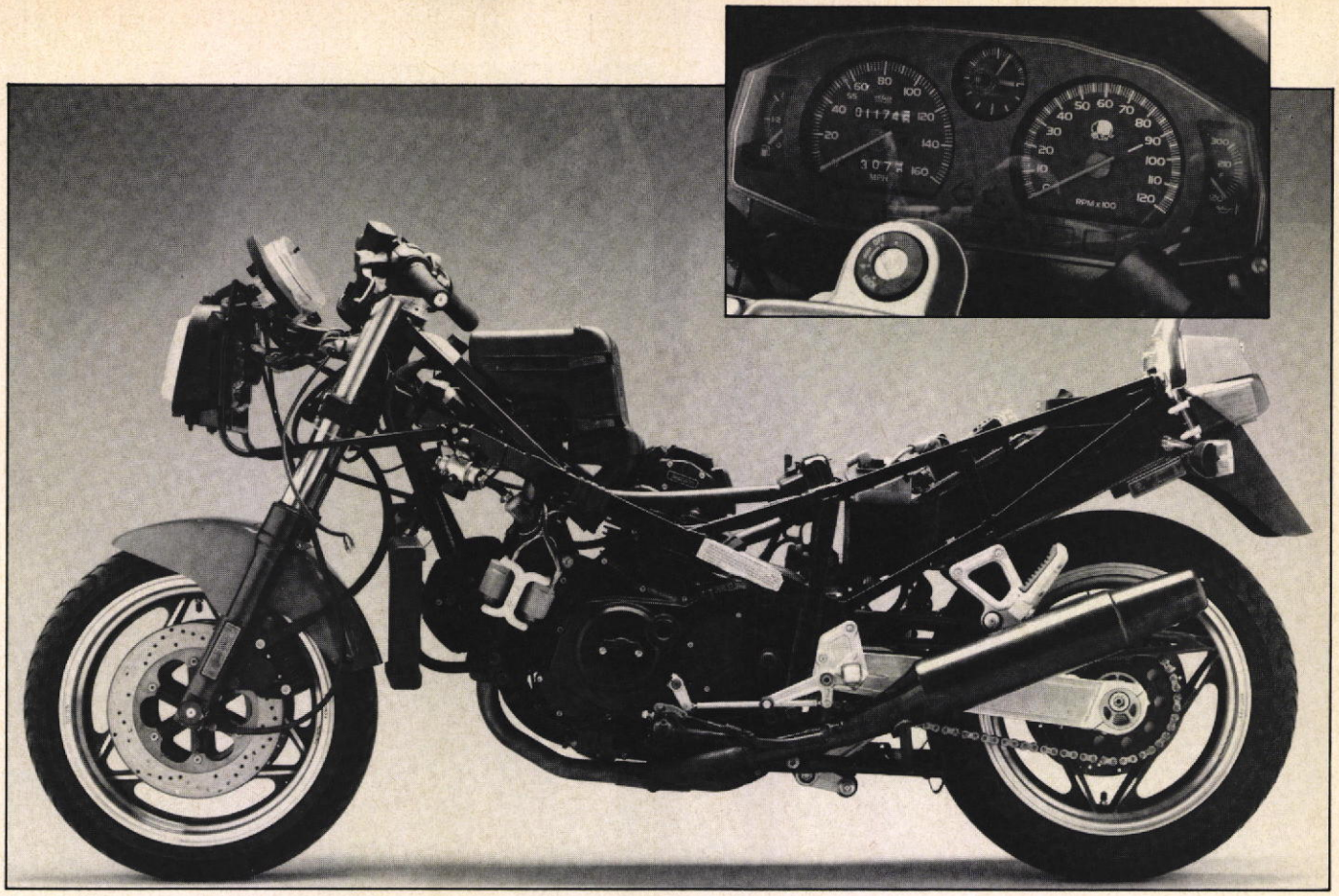

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1987 VIC HUBER

Square-tube frame owes little to previous Ducati designs, but the belt-drive vee-twin is a familiar fixture

While full instrumentation complements Cagiva's all-new exterior.

But even the ebullient Cagiva team knew the Paso couldn't fully compete in one area of performance: speed. Knowing this, Cagiva conceded the horsepower war to the high-winding four-cylinder Japanese machines, and tuned the air-cooled vee-twin to be tractable and predictable. The engineers got what they wanted, too, because the Paso's motor provides a pleasant and useful spread of power, starting at about 3500 rpm and lasting to 7500 rpm—spinning it from there to the 9000-rpm redline yields no extra grunt. While a 4000-rpm-wide powerband might not sound impressive, the Paso's close-ratio five-speed gearbox makes it simple to keep the 750 spinning in the meat of the power.

While the Paso's motor makes itself quite accessible, ultimately there's not a great deal here to access. According to the factory, the Paso makes 72 horsepower from its two cylinders and four valves. Coupled with the bike's 480-pound heft, the Paso's power-to-weight ratio can't quite compare to that of its Japanese competition. At the dragstrip, for instance, the 750's best clocking was a 13.890-second run, more than a second slower than the twin-cylinder EX500 Kawasaki. Overly rich jetting—at least for the L.A. County raceway's 2500-foot elevation—hampered the Paso's quarter-mile performance, as did touchy engagement by the dry clutch.

But impressive quarter-mile timeslips weren't part of the program; the emphasis here is on usable power. The Paso's style of power, coupled with its fairly tall gearing, better suit it to high-speed flying than to quarter-mile blitzes. With a respectable 124-mph top end, the Paso can maintain decent velocity on an open stretch of road, even though getting there takes some patience. Acceleration above an indicated 90 mph is leisurely, and getting the most speed out of the Paso on a particularly fast road means rowing the shifter to keep the bike as close to its 7000-rpm power peak as possible.

If there's a weak spot in the Paso's power delivery, it's carburetion. Cagiva opted for a two-barrel Weber butterfly-type carburetor in place of the twin Dell'Orto traditionally mated to the vee-twin Ducati motor, and the Weber/Ducati marriage—at least on our pre-production test unit—isn't a particularly happy one. For instance, the bike's throttle response often is uneven and unpredictable—quite unlike our 650 Elefant which is equipped with the Dell'Ortos. What's more, the twin-choke Weber on our Paso was excessively rich just above idle speeds, hurting both the bike's low-speed responsiveness and its ability to idle reliably. So when you try to move away from a stoplight, you must carefully feed in throttle, or you'll more than likely be straddling an attractive, utterly silent motorcycle.

Transplanting the Weber carb for the Dell'Ortos required a few changes to the venerable vee-twin engine. As with the dual-purpose Elefant, the Paso's rear cylinder head has been turned 180 degrees

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PASO 750

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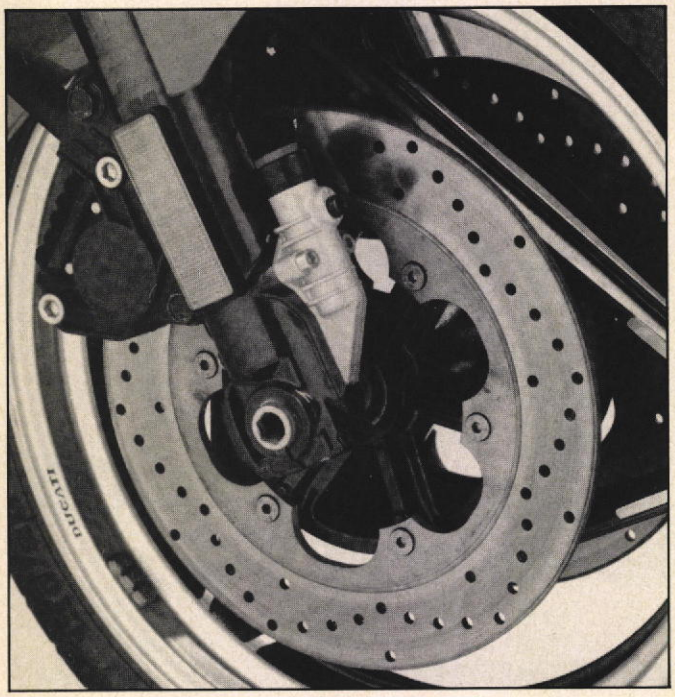
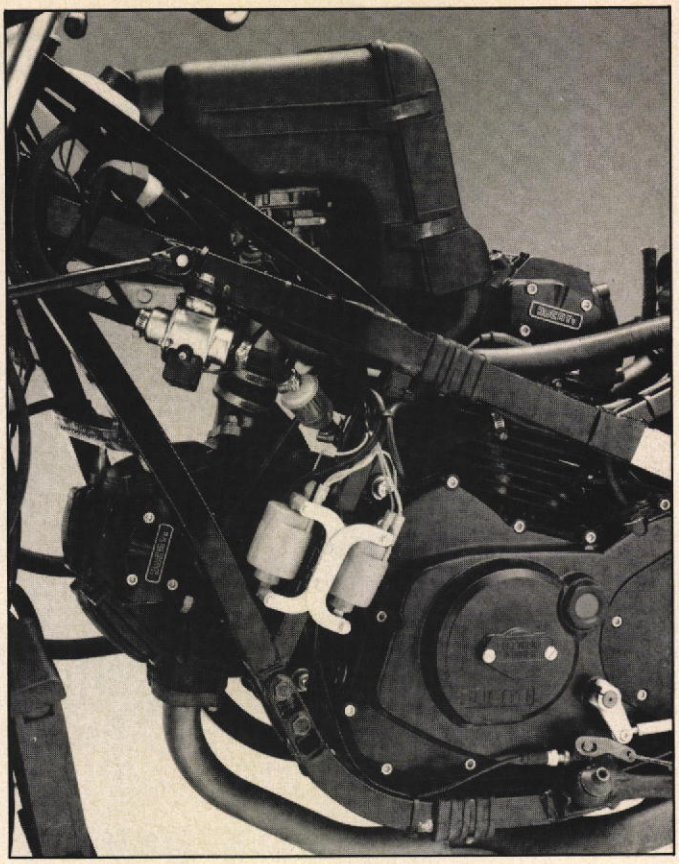


Paso's front end is reminiscent of Tamburini's Bimota db1

With Marzocchi M1R fork, Pirelli radials and Brembo brakes.



Revised intake system with all-new exhaust grace Ducati twin

But Weber carb's performance needs further revision.

to place the intake port in the crotch of the vee. A cast-aluminum manifold connects the Weber to both pots, while a two-into-two exhaust system handles the output side of the Paso's heads. Cagiva says that this new exhaust system, with a distinctive star-shaped collector under the oil sump, helps boost midrange power while also taming the vee-twin's bark, which allows for less restrictive silencers.

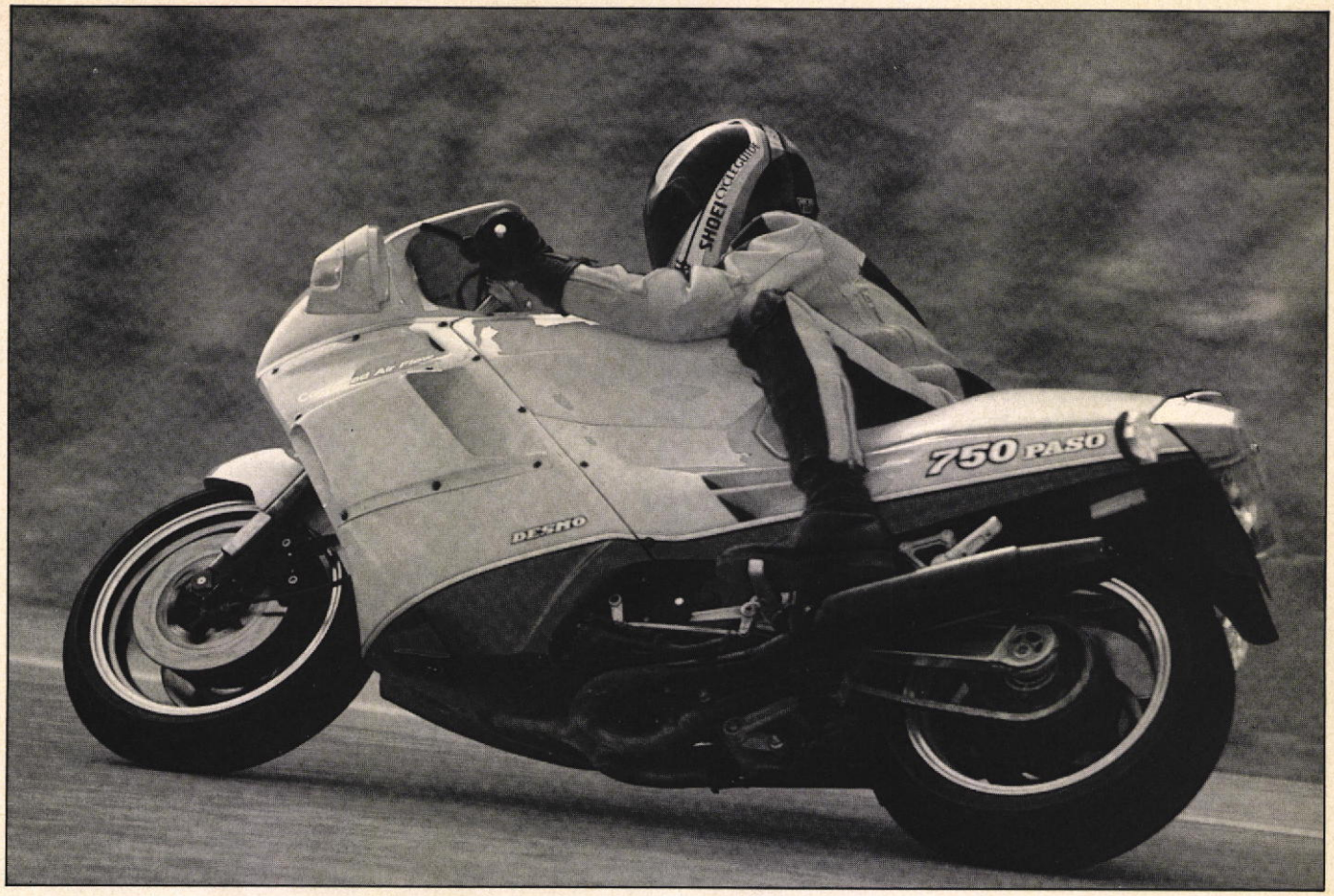
Further inside the motor, few changes have been made from the basic F-1B powerplant on which the Paso's is based. The five-speed transmission uses the same ratios as the race-bred F-1, and the 14-plate dry clutch returns untouched. The Paso also carries the large valves from the late-model F-1 (41mm intake, 35mm exhaust) and cam timing on the desmodromic valves is identical to the B-model's. Otherwise, the Paso uses a 9.3:1-compression ratio instead of the F-1's 10.0:1 ratio. Overall, Cagiva tried to retune the more-radical F-1B engine into a docile, streetworthy motor.

While the motor seems familiar to Ducati aficionados, the chassis wrapping around it might look as unfamiliar as Waterford crystal to a Skid-Row bum. To see that the Paso would be equipped to go head-to-head with the sportbike world, Cagiva turned to none other than Massimo Tamburini, of Bimota fame. Yet Tamburini didn't just rehash the Ducati-powered db1's frame for the Paso; he started with a clean sheet and came up with a generously triangulated framework of square-section steel tubes.

But while the framework is new, Tamburini gave the Paso some very db1-like dimensions. The 25-degree steering head angle and 105mm of trail are identical to the Bimota's, and the low-profile Pirelli radials on wide alloy rims also mimic the db1's hardware. One major departure between the two, however, is in wheelbase: At 57.3 inches, the Paso spans nearly 3 inches more between the axles, a difference that underscores Cagiva's intent to make the Paso more stable and forgiving than the hard-core Bimota.

For the most part, Cagiva succeeded in making the Paso an impressive high-speed performer. For one thing, the Paso is stable, and even up to its 124-mph upper end the bike remains unflappable. Surprisingly, despite its full-coverage bodywork, the Paso isn't much bothered by crosswinds and it provides the rider with decent protection from the elements, especially for the hands. In other respects, the Paso is just as accommodating for travel at scofflaw speeds—the motor is reasonably smooth at elevated speeds, and the powerful brakes impart plenty of confidence on the Paso's ability to get safely down from speed.

If your idea of backroad heaven includes tortuously tight roads, you'll be less enamored with the Paso. On the plus side, the 750 steers quickly and with reasonably little effort: It's not quite as nimble as, say, a Ninja 750, but by no means is it ponderous. Even so, the Paso possesses a few traits that make the bike more difficult to rush along a backroad than its Oriental competitors. For example, the Paso



© 1987 DAVID DEWHURST

stands up heartily under braking, and if you insist on trail-braking the Paso, be prepared for it to dive into the corner when the binders are released. What's more, the Paso's steering is more sensitive to bumps than any of its 750-class competitors: Charging over rippled pavement sets up a firm shake at the bar and often jolts the bike off your chosen cornering line.

Steering quirks aside, the Paso's handling qualities are quite good, thanks in part to a suspension calibrated for sporting use. Both ends of the Ducati are firmly sprung—although the bike isn't a bone-crusher in the Italobike tradition, it feels tauter and racier than several of the 750s on the market. The 42mm-stanchion Marzocchi M1R fork fitted to the Paso proves to be an accomplished performer; it handles medium-sized bumps and wheel-crushers easily, and the firm spring rates see to it that there's usually a small reserve of travel to handle unruly pavement while on the brakes. Similarly, the Marzocchi shock fitted to our test bike worked well—following ripples and frost heaves without complaint. Those sporting calibrations do steal some compliance from the suspension, though; freeway expansion joints rock the bike quite vigorously, even with the adjustments set to the bottom of their ranges.

That lack of compliance is the only thing that keeps the Paso from being the comfort king of the 750 class, too. Otherwise, the Paso earns high marks for long-distance travel; the vee-twin motor is smooth, though not particularly quiet mechanically, at highway speeds. Moreover, its riding position is moderate—the seat is cushy and the clip-on bars are positioned to strike a compromise between go-fast looks and sit-up comfort—giving the Paso pilot cruising range approaching the sport-tourer level.

The Paso's livable ergonomics make a strong statement about the bike, too. Clearly, Cagiva was deadly serious about the Paso. And in addition to being somewhat rough around the edges, our preproduction bike sports a riotously inaccurage fuel guage and mirrors that show more of your leathers than the road behind, not to mention the less-than-stellar carburetion. Even so, the important parts are all present and accounted for, and as a first effort the Paso must rate as remarkable.

But the Paso is remarkable in another way. Considering that this was a clean-sheet design for Cagiva, and purportedly the basis for a whole line of future streetbikes, the fact that the Paso isn't another TT F-1 racebike clone is significant. While those racer replicas still sell well to the Italophiles, their single-purpose design leaves them hopelessly hobbled as day-to-day streetbikes. Cagiva wasn't going to continue that tradition with the Paso, and the result is a motorcycle that sacrifices nothing in terms of flash, while offering up-to-date performance and everyday utility. That combination makes the Paso the first of a new breed of Italian sporters—one that Cagiva wholeheartedly hopes will succeed—to combine beauty with brains. ●

Continued

Ride Review

• Let's get one thing out of the way right up front, so the Italophiles can scare up some rope and find a tall tree: I'll pass on the Paso. Someone once said that to appreciate Italian motorcycles, you have to be able to look at a flaw and perceive it as character, and boy, does the Paso have character. Its stiff throttle and wonky carburetion simply ooze character, as does its leisurely acceleration and its behavior while braking in corners.

And before you trot out the usual Italo-apologist line about how gorgeous the Paso is and how that makes up for its numerous functional shortcomings, I don't give a damn about rolling sculpture. If that's what I want, I'll put a Brancuşi on a tea trolley. If I want a sportbike, I'll get a 600 Hurricane, a bike that can eat the Paso's lunch for about half the money. —*Jerry Smith*

• Cagiva obviously ignored the sportbike form book when it designed the Paso. Compared to its Japanese counterparts, the Paso is passe in performance: The Italian vee-twin feels sluggish during acceleration, and the Cagiva's riding position is rather confining.

But I can live with those shortcomings. And I forgive its other faults, too—stiff suspension and inconsistent carburetion. Because everytime I ride this European sportster, I'm reminded that motorcycles *do* have personalities. In the case of the Paso, its signature is (and without sounding too "California"), *funk*. Simply, the Paso is funky, and shouldn't be taken as seriously as the Oriental sportbikes. Instead, it should be treated as art, to be enjoyed for the moment, and nothing more.

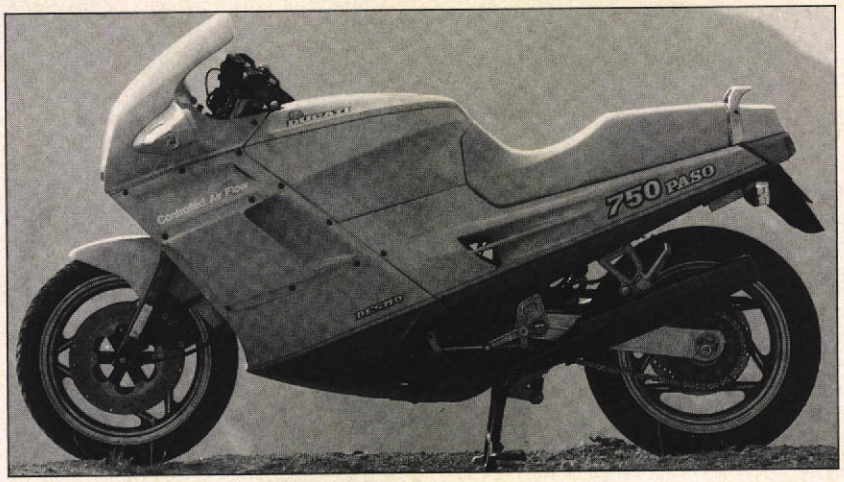
—*Dain Gingerelli*

• Until I rode the Paso, I'd never seen a bike attract so much attention. *Everywhere* I parked it, a small crowd gathered, with questions and comments like "What's a Doo-cat-i?" and "That thing is gorgeous! I'll bet it hauls ass!"

I didn't mind, at first, but some of these impromptu Paso-seminars evolved into debates, where *I* had the burden of proving that the Paso really isn't as fast as it looks. And even though no one else present had dealt with the Weber carburetor's habit of not carbureting, and the quirky handling, trying to convince *anyone* that the Paso wasn't the fastest two-wheeler around only made them mad.

Eventually I gave up; but if any those guys pay six-grand for a two-wheel pseudo-Ferrari, they can't say I didn't warn them. —*Mike Gillies*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS



Cagiva/Ducati Paso 750 — street

IMPORTER: Cagiva North America, Inc., 700 W. 190th St., Gardena, California 90248

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $6377

ENGINE

Type . . . . . four-stroke tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement . . . single overhead camshafts, two valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 88.0mm x 61.5mm
Displacement 748.1cc
Compression ratio 9.3:1
Engine redline . . . . . 9000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . one 44mm two-barrel Weber butterfly-type with accelerator pump
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . 12-volt; 300-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 14-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 1.972:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . dry, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #530 O-ring chain; 2.533:1 (38/15) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.500	12.490	5.53
II	1.714	8.565	8.07
III	1.333	6.662	10.37
IV	1.074	5.366	12.87
V	0.956	4.824	14.32

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . Marzocchi air-spring, 42mm stanchion tube diameter, 4-position adjustable rebound damping/5.2 in. (131mm)
Rear . . . . single Marzocchi, 15mm spring preload spring preload range, 5-position adjustable rebound damping/4.4 in. (111mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 9.4-in. (240mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 9.3-in. (235mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 130/60ZR16 Pirelli MP7S radial tubeless
Rear . . . . . 160/60ZR16 Pirelli MP7S radial tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . 480 lbs. (217.7kg)
Weight distribution . . . . 49.4% front, 50.6% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . 884 lbs. (401.0kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 372 lbs. (168.7kg)
Wheelbase . . . 56.9 to 57.7 in. (1445 to 1465mm)
Seat height . . . . . 30.6 in. (776mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 25.0 in. (636mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 13.7 in. (347mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 5.3 in. (134mm), at exhaust crossover
Steering head angle . . . 25.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.13 in. (105mm)
Frame . . . . . full-cradle; box-section mild steel
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.6 qt. (3.4/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 5.3 gal. (20.0/), no reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, engine-oil temperature gauge, fuel gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 31 to 47 mpg (13 to 20 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . 38 mpg (16 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 164 to 249 miles (264 to 401km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph ind. . . . . 30 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph ind. . . . . 55 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 13.890 sec., 95.64 mph (154 kph)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 124 mph (199 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 30 ft. (9.1m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . 123 ft. (37.5m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: red only

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

JAWA ICE-RACER

The ice man goeth.

BY MAC McDIARMID

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1987 ROBERT LÖFGREN/MAC McDIARMID

JAWA

The front wheel sawed the air down the straights, and around the turns jumped violently airborne from rut to rut.

At least the math's simple. On most bikes, there's an infinite number of ways to dispatch yourself to the Great Parts Bin in the Sky. Human ingenuity being what it is, no sooner will you put a number on it than somebody'll come along to leave that figure one short. An ice-racer, on the other hand, is a precision instrument. It's got exactly 250 lethal modes, each 28mm long and keener than a hypodermic.

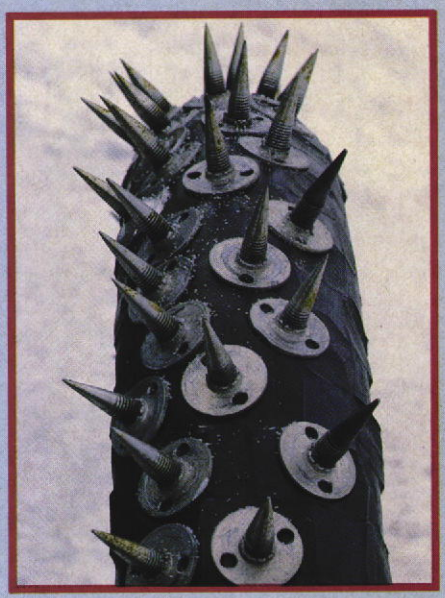
I'm referring to the spiked tires that make ice-racing like no other form of wheeled sport since chariot racing. Theoretically, these metal barbs offer absolute, inviolable grip—no sliding whatsoever. Despite a superficial resemblance to speedway, the technique is utterly different—no steel-shod power slides, no opposite lock. The only time an ice bike slides is *after* it's crashed. Which I'd been invited to prove.

And so to Karlsborg, central Sweden, which may have been warm once. My mentor was Swedish roadrace champion Peter Linden, who, bored with his mundane job piloting Viggen jets at Mach two-point-something, gets it off on a Honda RS500 during the summer and a Jawa 500 ice-racer in the winter. In his first season on ice, he came fourth in a Swedish championship, good enough to overthrow the '85 World No. 1, Erik Stenlund. You could say he's got talent.

Bump-starting a cold ice bike is as rewarding as push-starting a boat, but slipperier. So the engine is draped beneath a charred quilt, under which is poked the business end of a trashbin-sized propane torch. The propane is lit, the quilt chars some more, the engine warms up and everyone ignores the more spectacular chemical properites of hot methanol. The Swedes use the wait to practice heartiness, despite seeming quite proficient already.

Eventually, the Jawa's warm enough, and bump-starting begins. This mainly consists of falling on your face in the snow. After a while, someone detects the sound of incipient combustion, inspiring the Swedes to fall on their faces with renewed vigor. At last, the engine thumps into life, filling the woods with its lyrical note, the sweet smell of methanol and Castrol R, and the sound of coughing.

Peter goes out with his mates to practice for the following week's Swedish Championship semifinal. Watching them at close quarters is truly awe-inspiring. The angles of lean are astonishing—handlebar ends, clutch basket, elbows, knees, hips, all scuffing the ice. The front wheels saw the air down the straights, and around the turns jump violently airborne from rut to rut. Sometimes the clutch basket digs in hard, throwing the front end brutally sideways and threatening a high-side. Any thoughts I had about this being a serene cruise on billiard-table smoothness quickly disappear. Eventually someone has a front tire puncture and clouts the frozen bales in a flurry of ice chips. Everyone laughs, but he's OK. Now it's my turn.



I'm introduced to the bike, trying as much charm as I can muster, but it just sits there looking malevolent. It resembles an anorexic chopper with a seat as soft and roomy as a sand wedge. Around the front spokes are a pair of plastic guards, apparently to keep other people's handlebars out. This once happened to Peter in a race—"without spokes it did not steer too good," he redundantly confides.

The bike's fired up. I sit on board with a cord connected to a kill-switch wrapped around my wrist—in the event of a spill I'll merely be perforated rather than dismembered by the machine. As far as others are concerned, it's open season on fallen riders. There are only two gears, fast and bloody frightening, and once into the latter, you leave it there. As a parting gesture,

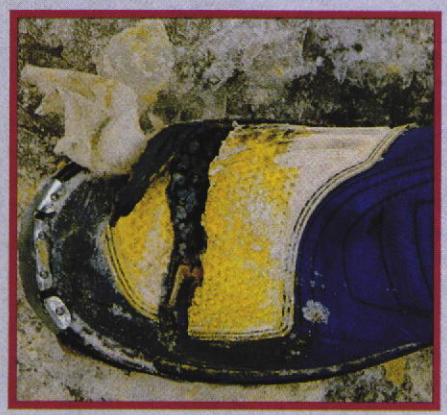
someone shows me the hole in his boot where his big toe was severed. Everyone grins at all the fun I'm about to enjoy. My mouth's so dry I can't argue.

The view from the saddle, composed mainly of the front tire and its ranks of 98 vicious spikes, does nothing for confidence. Presumably if you crash, you hang on, because nothing you're likely to hit could possibly hurt you as much as the bike. First gear slides in with no more noise than a small South American coup and off we go.

The steering feels as though the steering-head bearings are either oval or square. The bike yaws violently from right to left with a mind of its own. Opening the throttle seems to improve matters, but puts more energy than seems prudent into the inevitable spill. I'm still not in control when turn one appears. Roll off the power and reach for the brakes. There aren't any, and the bike wants to go straight on anyway. Push harder on the inside bar. Glory be, it seems to work, but the front wheel is completely delinquent. The rigid rear end and minimal seat padding are truly painful over the ruts; the fork is hammering my wrists; I haven't a clue what to do with my left leg; the right one keeps slipping off the rest; my visor's steamed up and I daren't let go to lift it; my arms and shoulders are clenched like a virgin's whatsit; and after two laps, I'm thoroughly knackered.

I stop to ask how it looks—"pathetic." The Swedes go into re-heat on hearty. Someone offers to bring his granny to show me the way. Phase two begins under the expert tuition of one Johnnie Walker, late of Kilmarnock, Scotland. This induces something closer to courage (if farther from control) and resolves that I shall now go quicker, or stop messing about at any rate. I quietly acquiesce.

I'm surprised to find that more speed (or the scotch) makes the riding easier. The Jawa is far from slow—around 60 horsepower at 8000 rpm on alcohol and a compression ratio in the mid-teens. Rules limit them to 500cc, two valves and a 34mm carb, but even so the hottest examples put out over 80 horses. They must also have at least 68 degrees cornering clearance—



most have more but still they ground—plus a low-drag handlebar-end! Compared to speedway bikes, they're longer and less steeply raked, giving greater stability, at least compared to a shopping cart.

A typical circuit is about 400 yards long, and a four-lap race lasts under a minute. The straights see a top speed near 70 mph, which means something over 50 mph through the turns, none of which are much roomier than hairpins. It must be those *g*s that make it so hard on the backside—I could scarcely walk for two days after.

Meanwhile, turn one is approaching again. Even in my hands and with straights not much longer than 130 yards, 60 horses can chuck something weighing 250 pounds at a turn pretty rapidly. The technique is to pitch the bike onto your knee, shin and instep, trail the throttle to the apex, then progressively nail it. The front gets light, ricocheting off ruts, kicking and flapping despite the tightness of the steering damper. Ice splinters rap painfully, knee and foot jarring across the grooves and ridges through a covering of old tires, backside and elbows pummeling, correcting the steering—there's far too much going on to worry about those spikes. The surface is abominable after just 20 laps by four bikes—the end of a World Final must be like skateboarding on a corrugated tin roof.

Graunch, flap, correct, crunch, wobble, the bike always tries to run wide towards the bales on the exit. Rider feedback is back to front—rear wheel grip is total but the front end steps out frantically. The bales, frozen to the hardness of pumice, rush past your right ear as you hit the straight on full noise. You decide "this time, I'm going to hang on to the power until *really* late," then chicken out. It's hard for a brain raised on normal grip to recalibrate for the crazy angles on ice.

Some things you don't notice. Like the cold—pretty intense at 10 below zero—or the vibration. Dope-burning big singles have been known to shake out hair and teeth, but all you have a mind for is keeping things spikey side down. There isn't so much as a tach to distract you—you simply screw the bike in first, slam it clutchless into top on full noise, then ring its neck as much as you dare. The only limiter is in your head. Pretty much like any other form of racing, really.

Except for those 250 spikes, that is. •

Ice And A Slice

The cold, hard facts about ice-racing.

• In the United States, ice-racing is confined primarily to a handful of flattrack racers passing the winter months by fitting studded tires to their bikes and taking over local ice rinks for some subzero shorttracking. Things are a bit different in Europe, however, where ice-racing is as well-attended and loudly cheered by spectators as Mile races are by American race fans. Participants in the sport of ice-racing, a particularly frigid and perilously lunatic form of motorized competition, would, you'd think, be confined to individuals accustomed by environment and heredity to ice, such as Scandinavians and Siberians. Even though the United Kingdom has its share of cold and damp, there's not a lot of ice, so you'd hardly expect to find Englishmen involved in ice-racing. But there is, in fact, a British ice-racing team, and just to add a really bizarre touch to this already weird scenario, the leading "British" rider is a half-Maori New Zealander.

Two out of the three British team members are speedway riders. Bruce Cribb, the aforementioned Maori, is the most experienced—he even made the reserve berth for a World Final once—and John Walmsley is the other. But the third man, Graham Halsall, is an enduro rider who answered an advertisement for an ice-racing vacation in Sweden, and found he could ride an ice bike tolerably well. Consequently, Reg Thomas put him onto the squad. His third meeting was a World Championship quarter final in West Berlin last year in which he scored enough points to convince the management he was worth keeping on for '87.

Halsall demonstrated his talent when I went to see him ride at a World Quarter Final in Holland. Displaying a lack of nerves that I found almost superhuman, Halsall took the time to explain the technique of riding an ice bike. It is, he says, "different." I can believe that. "Shut the throttle and it'll drop into the turn, open the throttle and it stands up and goes straight on." While I was trying to absorb this information, Graham smiled at me in the way people do at particularly backward children and said, "Really, it's like the wall of death with two straights."

The effect of this horribly graphic statement was emphasized by the fact that Graham has one of the most spectacularly broken noses I've ever seen. Surprisingly enough, though, ice-racing produces very few accidents under normal circumstances. Unfortunately, when injuries occur they tend to be serious, to put it mildly. Lore has it that if a new rider can stand the sight of all the scars on display in the locker room, he'll be OK.

After that, an ice-racer's greatest problem, it seems, is what to do with his left leg. The bikes lay so far over in a turn that there isn't even room for the rudimentary left-side footrest that adorns speedway bikes. When you get in the turn, says Halsall, "you pick your left leg up and try and get your ankle up your butt." The fact that it's being shot-blasted by high-speed ice cubes no doubt encourages this eccentric maneuver.

Most ice-racing tracks are borrowed from the speed skaters and are thus the Olympic distance of 400 meters around, although their shapes vary. Eindhoven looked to me like two straights joined by two hairpins. Couple these tight corners with the all-or-nothing behavior of an ice bike and you understand why there are two options for the racer; the inside line or around the boards.

The first path involves shutting off early, say around the start/finish line, and cutting across the track from out by the bales to take a tight line hugging the painted line on the ice. This line means the rider can't open the throttle again until he's way past the conventional apex. The outside line—as favored by the Russians, who are more used to 700m tracks—appears to involve heading for the fence at the end of the straight, shutting off momentarily then dropping the bike right onto its engine cases and whacking the throttle back open at the conventional apex. The line this produces is as wide as you can get without paying to get back in.

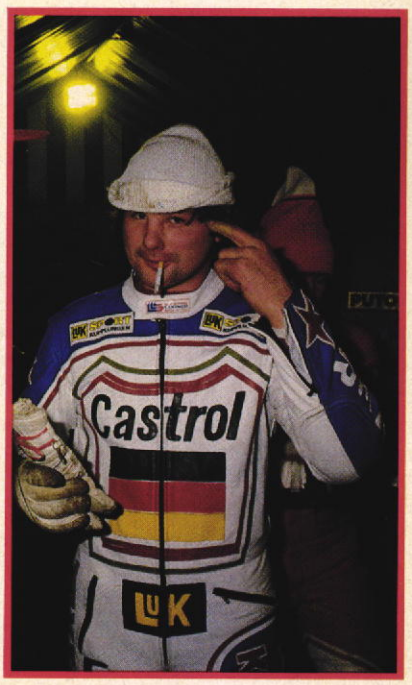
At Eindhoven the real interest centered on whether the Czech, Antonin Klatovsky—graying, with a mad gleam in his eyes and a very lived-in face—

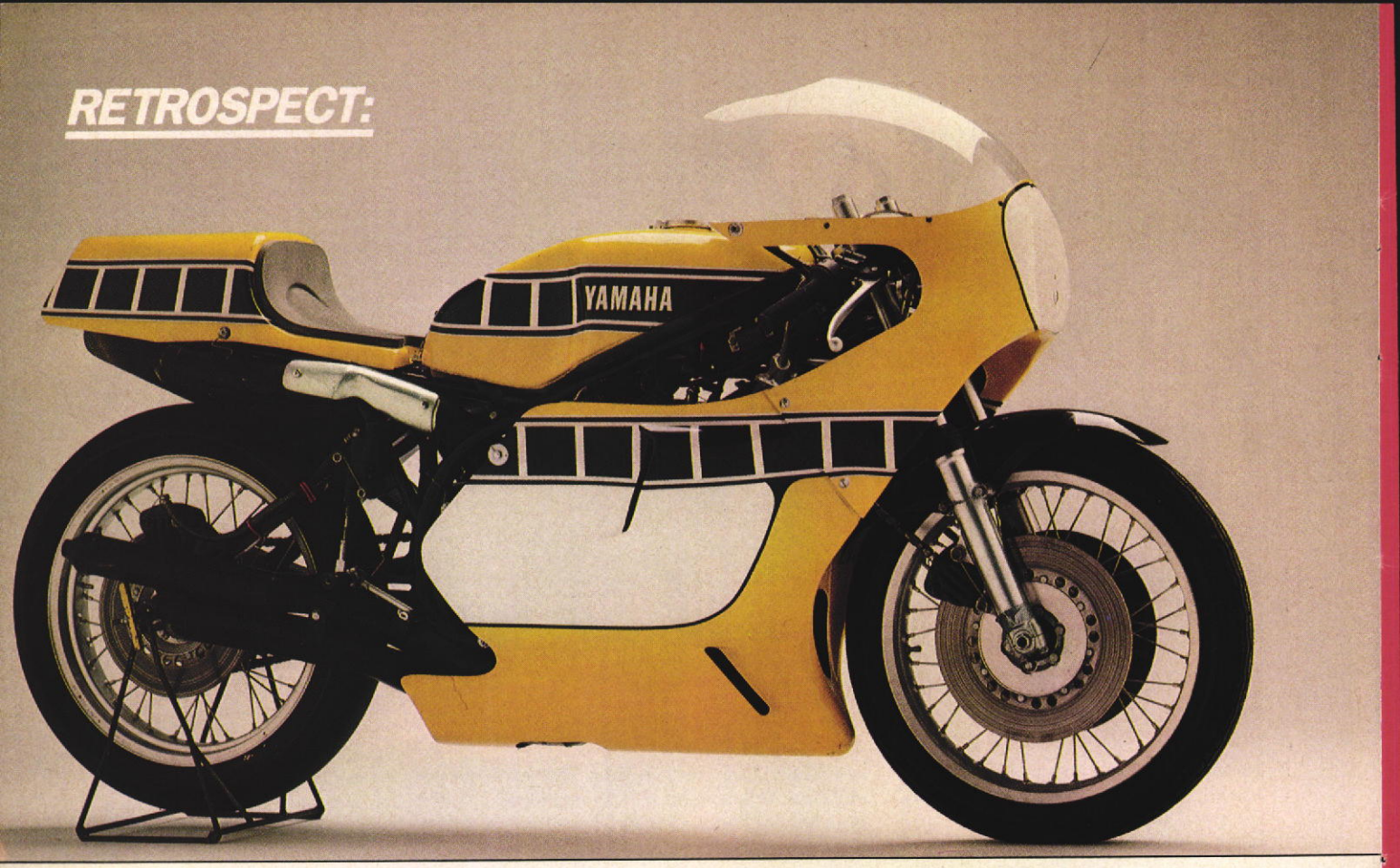
PHOTOGRAPHY © 1987 GARY STUART

could do anything about two unknown Russians, Rais Mustafin and Vitaly Russkih. Incidental interest was provided by German rider Gunter Brand, who highsided twice. The second time, a Dutch rider laid his bike down to avoid hitting Brand. "Couldn't have known he was a German," said the Dutch Red Cross man standing next to me.

Mustafin went through the weekend unbeaten, saving his most spectacular move—a last-turn dive up the inside—for Klatovsky. The Czech took second overall and beat Russkih twice, the second time with a move that should have been banned by the Geneva Convention. Graham Halsall wasn't having quite such a good weekend, though. He crashed three times and finished next to last. He was also involved in the only injury of the weekend. In the last heat of the meeting, Bruno Montardin tried to cut across Halsall on the first bend, leaving nowhere for Halsall to put his front wheel but against Montardin's leg. Amazingly, Montardin went on to take second. It was only when he crossed the start/finish line and looked down at his calf that he started feeling unwell.

Had a bystander with a peculiar sense of humor suggested to Montardin that he "put a little ice on it," he might have received a glare in return that would have melted the track. On the other hand, Montardin might have done just that. Ice-racing is a tough game, and ice-racers are tough men—it takes more than just being mugged by a chainsaw to slow them down. *—Julian Ryder*





Yamaha TZ750

Built for winning.

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

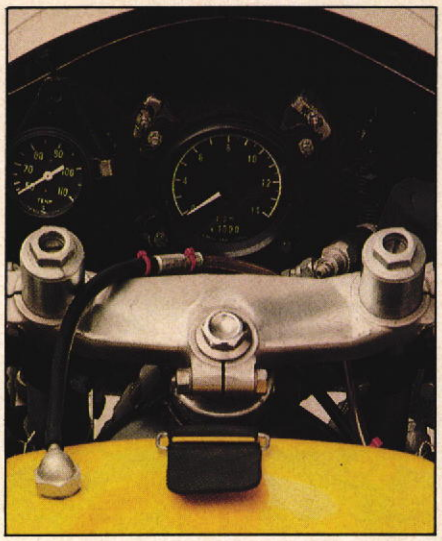
Yamaha's TZ750 immediately brings vivid images to mind: Kenny Roberts sliding his bumblebee-striped 750 through a cambered-bowl turn at Loudon, New Hampshire, Johnny Cecotto blazing a name for himself at Daytona, or Steve Baker capturing America's first-ever roadracing world championship. In a word, the TZ750 was a winner. As proof, every Daytona 200 from 1974 to 1982 was won by Yamaha's most famous in-line four—the TZ750.

The TZ750's dominance of the Daytona 200 isn't surprising, either. Though the big-bore two-stroke was designed to win AMA roadraces in general, Daytona headed that list. Prior to 1974, Yamaha's only roadracers were the small-bore twin-cylinder two-strokes, the TZ250 and TZ350. Sure, the tiny TZ350 had won Daytona two years running, but Suzuki and Kawasaki had dealt themselves into the Daytona game with their three-cylinder 750s. Against that competition, Yamaha needed a large-bore bike to take advantage of the AMA's existing 750cc displacement rule. Yamaha needed a trump card, and hidden up the race shop's sleeve was the TZ750A. Two hundred of the new 750s—actually the first 166 engines were 700cc—were dealt to racers in time to hit The Beach for 1974. The quest to dominate Daytona was on.

Yamaha actually took a shortcut in developing the TZ750. Rather than produce a bike from the ground up, Yamaha simply added bigger cylinders to its existing YZR500 Grand Prix roadracer. By stretching the YZR's cylinder bore from 54mm to 64mm, the TZ750A was born. The 750A's actual displacement was 694cc; a common misconception at the time was that the 700 engine was simply a mating of two TZ350s engine top ends. Not so. While the 700 and 350 shared a number of important features—including 64mm x 54mm bore and stroke, pistons, connecting rods and crank pins—the similarities ended there. More accurately, the TZ750A was nothing more than a YZR500 with bigger cylinders.

And at $3600 retail, the TZ750A was a bargain. Despite the advantages for privateers, though, the 1974 Daytona winner was the factory-backed TZ750 ridden by 13-time world champion, Giacomo Agostini. Ago set the example for the new TZ its first race, and not until Kenny Roberts' 1983 Daytona win aboard the OW69 (yet *another* bored-out 500cc GP bike) did the TZ750's string of nine Daytona 200 wins come to an end. The TZ750's final moment of glory in AMA competition was Greg Smrz's Pocono win in 1983. It marked the end of an era.

Of course, during that era the odds of the TZ750 being bumped from Daytona's victory circle were slim, indeed. Yamaha enjoyed an unfair advantage from the start, as practically any racer—privateer or factory-backed—with any chance of winning an AMA roadrace at the time was TZ750-mounted. According to Ya-



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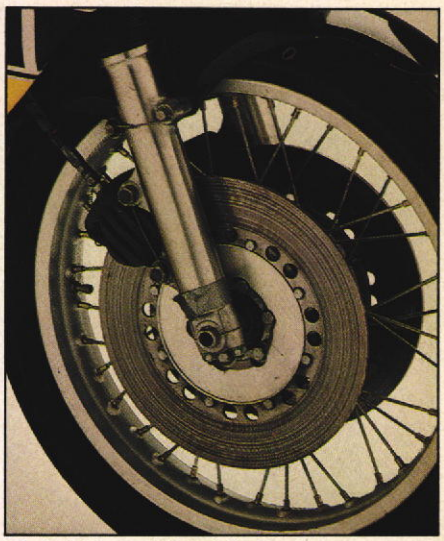
TZ's instrumentation was minimal

All you know and all you need know.

Yamaha's own hydraulic brake caliper

Safety wired, and ready to stop.



The TZ750 needed dual disc brakes

And still, the riders wanted more.

maha, 527 TZ750s were built and sold, including the 166 original 700cc versions in 1974, and that number guaranteed that at some AMA roadraces the entire *field* consisted of TZ750s.

The TZ750 marked a milestone in motorcycle roadracing for another reason, too. Due to the horrendous amount of horsepower spewing from its four cylinders, the TZ750 was, to say the least, a handful to ride. Consequently, this placed a premium on the suspension and tires, and sparked the technological race that's taken motorcycles to today's heights. Specifically, the TZ750's two most important contributions to today's technology were the incorporation of the single rear shock absorber for roadracing, and the adoption of slick tires.

The TZ750 gave American racers another first, too: Our first roadrace world

© 1987 DAIN GINGERELLI

Continued

champion. Not since Jack Milne won the speedway World Final in 1937 had an American been listed in the FIM record books as a world champion. Steve Baker and his Bob Work-tuned, factory-backed OW31 changed that in 1977, by winning the Formula 750 World Championship. Baker and the TZ750 opened the floodgates, and Yanks have been filling the FIM record books and displacing Europeans ever since.

But the name most associated with the TZ750 is that of Kenny Roberts. King Kenny made riding a TZ750 look easy. Roberts could stuff a 340-pound TZ into a corner, then spin the rear wheel on the exit, without once bobbling the bike. But Roberts will argue that riding the TZ750 that way wasn't as easy as it looked. "The TZ is a bike with a big engine in a little frame to keep it small and lightweight," says Roberts. As he points out, those are prime ingredients for an ill-handling motorcycle.

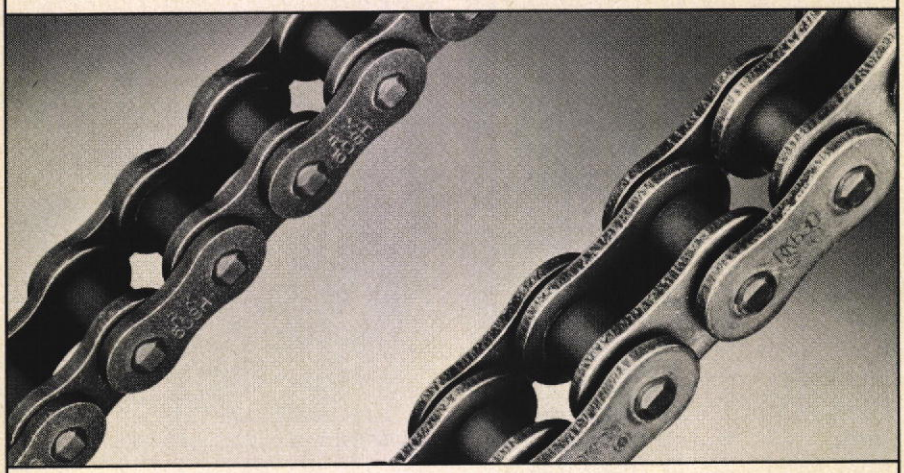
"It was always a compromise," recalls Roberts about the TZ's handling, which made chassis setup a series of judgment calls. "There was never a time when you could say, 'That's it; it's perfect, leave it alone.' The thing always seemed to want to wobble because of the power. You were always getting on it harder than the bike actually wanted, and you were always manhandling it."

Naturally, with 125 or so horsepower galloping off the crankshaft, the rear wheel would spin easily, even with the sticky slick tires that Goodyear developed especially for the TZ. As Roberts points out, "If you slid more than six, seven, eight inches, you were heading for a highside. You could catch it, and then it'd highside you."

Despite this discomfitting idiosyncrasy, the TZ750 became legendary because it did exactly what Yamaha wanted it to do—win races. However, some racers—Roberts included—place the legend in a different light. As KR puts it, "If you didn't want to win the race, they were great bikes."

But the record books won't measure how far the TZ750 could slide before it pitched its rider over the handlebars, nor will the books register how much wheelspin the TZ could make. What the record books will show is that the Yamaha TZ750 won more AMA roadraces over a span of more years, than any other motorcycle, ever. And that's a pretty remarkable feat, but for anyone who saw Roberts pilot one through the banking at Daytona, the TZ750 is more than remarkable: It's unforgettable. ●

IT DOES THE JOB OF TWO...



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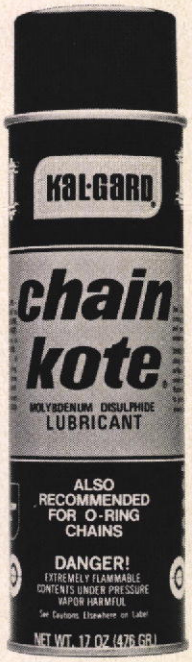

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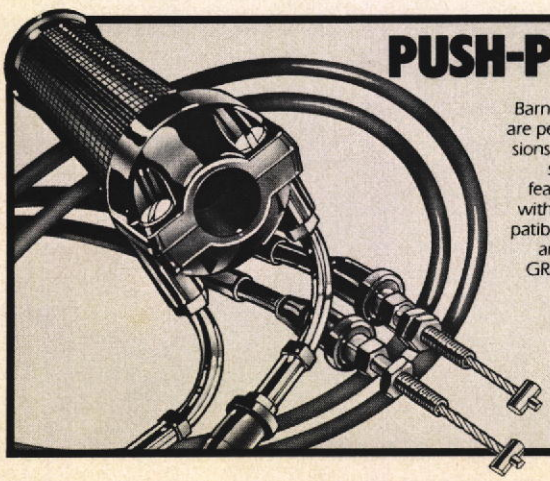

Barnett's new, fast action push pull throttles are perfect for high performance carb conversions. These top quality throttles are made of strong fiberglass impregnated nylon and feature a narrow 1⅛" wide housing for use with stock switches; 10mm threads are compatible with stock cables. Throttles are $15.95 and cable sets are $15.50 suggested retail. GRAB A HANDFUL-Install a Barnett today!

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Lockhart Sport Pak Weekender II

Mount 'em up, boys, we're ready to ride.

• Motorcycle luggage is a bit like a horse's saddle. The purpose of both is to hold something—be it a cowboy or an extra sweater—firmly attached to the appropriate beast of burden, either a horse or a motorcycle. One such item—made for motorcycles, not horses—is Lockhart's Sport Pak Weekender II.

The Weekender II is a seat bag, designed to be mounted on the passenger part of a motorcycle seat. A nylon-web carrying handle is built in, along with D-rings for the clip-on shoulder strap. Made of sturdy nylon Cordura, the bag itself is water-resistant, but not waterproof, and lacks a rain cover.

But inclement weather aside, there's little about the bag to keep you from taking off for the *entire* weekend. As its name implies, the Weekender II can hold enough to get you through to Sunday evening: a change of clothes, a sweater, thick gloves, *plus* your beach towel, radio and sunscreen lotion. If that sounds far-fetched, consider that a helmet fits easily into the main compartment, and each side pocket will hold an additional 130 cubic inches, for a total capacity of 1150 cubic inches.

The main compartment opens with a double-tabbed zipper around three sides. The double-tabs allow you to open the panel only as much as you need, making it easy to get to anything packed inside without spilling everything. That same panel has a patch pocket on the outside, covered by a Velcro-secured flap. The side pockets each have a zipper up the top 2 inches of one side, across the top, then 2 inches down the other side, also allowing easy access to pocket contents.

Keeping the bag on the bike is the job assigned to the bungee-cord mounting system of the Weekender II. The arrangement consists of two permanently mounted bungee cords threaded through the bottom of the bag, so one end hangs out at each of the four bottom corners. Stretch the cords to ensure a snug fit and hook the bungee ends under the seat, over the turn signals or wherever they fit; the tension keeps the bag from moving around on the seat.

Like the stirrups on a saddle, though, the bungees can get in the way when the bag is being carried, so Lockhart hid a pair of bottom-opening compartments between the main bag and the side pockets. Stuff the cords inside the compartments, fasten the Velcro strips at the opening and the hooks disappear, out of harm's way. It's easy and quick—quite a handy solution.

With its innovative cord-storage system, its basic, usable mounting system, sturdy construction and all that room, Lockhart has produced a seat bag that works well. It holds its contents securely and stays in place—just like a horse's saddle. The Sport Pak just uses a different beast of burden, that's all.

—Mary Barker

Lockhart Sport Pak Weekender II
Manufacturer: Lockhart Consumer Products, 15717 Texaco St., Paramount, California 90723
Available colors: Black, red, red/black/gray
Suggested retail price: $49.95

Velcro closure corrals bungee hooks

So you won't bridle at unwanted snags.

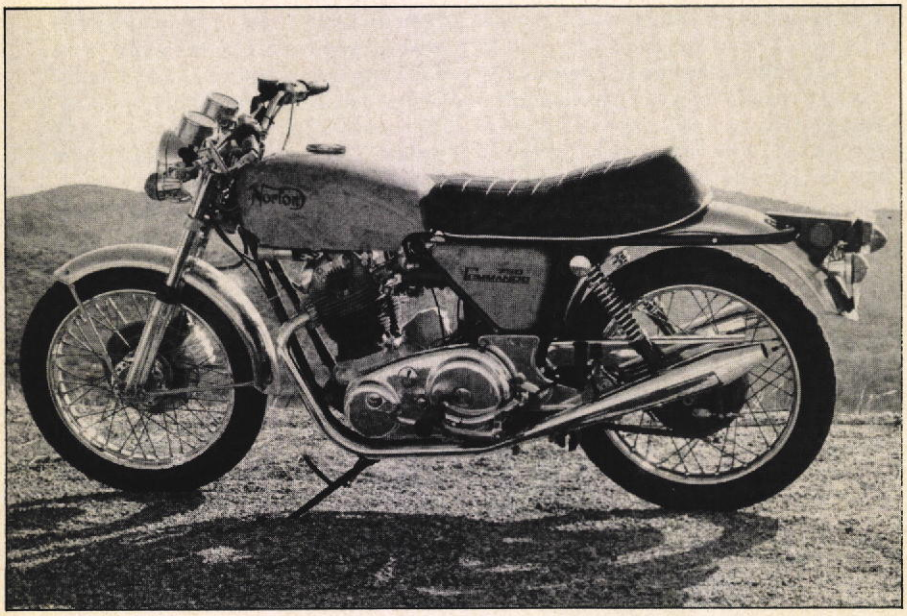
Sport Pak Weekender stows enough gear to ride off into two sunsets in a row

With room for your riding boots and your full-coverage ten-gallon hat.

BARGAIN CLASSIC:

NORTON COMMANDO 1967-1975

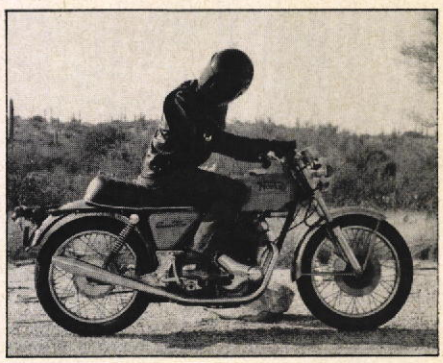
A certified member of the English royal family.



• During the mid-'70s, three things were inevitable: death, taxes, and a Norton ad on CYCLE GUIDE's inside cover, discussing Lean Weight, Isolastic engine mounts and The Ultimate Ride. And the subject of those ads was a motorcycle that inspired lust in the hearts of enough Americans males to make Jimmy Carter blush: the Norton Commando.

Introduced in 1967, the original 745cc Commando was a bit of a gamble. Its predecessor, the Atlas, had gained a well-deserved reputation as a shaker, yet Norton lacked the funds for an engine redesign to eliminate the problem. Instead, the company worked to control the vibration transmitted to the rest of the bike, and came up with a system that mounted the engine, transmission and swingarm as a unit, isolated by three shimmed rubber mounts. While rubber engine mounts are common practice today, in 1967 the Isolastic system was a novelty.

They're also notable for their effectiveness. Despite the reputation of English vertical twins as buzzers, the Norton Commando is surprisingly smooth at normal highway speeds. Only above 70 mph does the motor betray its vertical-twin heritage, shaking the handlebar like a lawnmower at idle. But while engine vibration comes through only at certain engine speeds, the bike's torque is evident throughout the rpm range. The Norton never produces an overabundance of power, but it still can manage a 12-second ¼-mile. More important, though, the motor's broad power delivery usually makes the four-speed transmission a set-and-forget item.



Norton's performance outshone its peers'

Leaving the other British twins behind.

Unfortunately, the same system that works to quell vibration can also introduce some odd handling quirks; since the Isolastic system also mounts the swingarm in rubber, a loosely shimmed system can create some interesting oscillations in corners. Likewise, the suspension on the Commandos poses limitations on the bike's handling; the fork and shocks are typically oversprung and underdamped, which can make fast, bumpy corners a near-religious experience. As long as you're willing to ride the bike within the limits imposed by a '70s-vintage chassis, though, the Commando's light weight and wide handlebar make the bike genuinely nimble and fun to ride.

Over the years, one item that remained every bit as predictable as the Norton's handling was its improvement. During the early '70s, Norton Villiers Triumph worked feverishly to keep its flagship near the front in the performance wars, despite its aging engine design. Consequently the Commando received a number of improvements over the years, most notable of which were the addition of a disc brake to replace the weak twin-leading-shoe drum on the early models, as well as a displacement increase from 745cc to 828cc, in 1973.

Moreover, everything from the flywheel material to the main bearings was uprated during the Commando's short lifespan, though a number of items—the drooling Amal Concentric carburetors, the oil leaks and stumbling idle—remained as predictable as London fog. And while that means the later bikes arguably are better than the early ones, most of the problems can be solved by the small core of Norton devotees across the country. That same group—and a consistent source in England—ensures that parts availability is better than for Japanese bikes of the same era; in fact, even the original TT100 tires are still available from Dunlop. And when you consider that a good Commando will set you back less than two grand, the Norton's appeal glistens even more.

Oddly enough, with rumors of Norton resuming production, the Commando's future seems brighter now than it did in the mid-'70s, when, despite the company's loyal following, Norton slipped down the same ceramic convenience that swallowed BSA. By 1976 the Commando was off the market, and the Norton ads were gone. The inside cover of CYCLE GUIDE's December 1975 issue went to Kawasaki. —*Jim Miller*

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Kawasaki Phantom Jacket and Pants

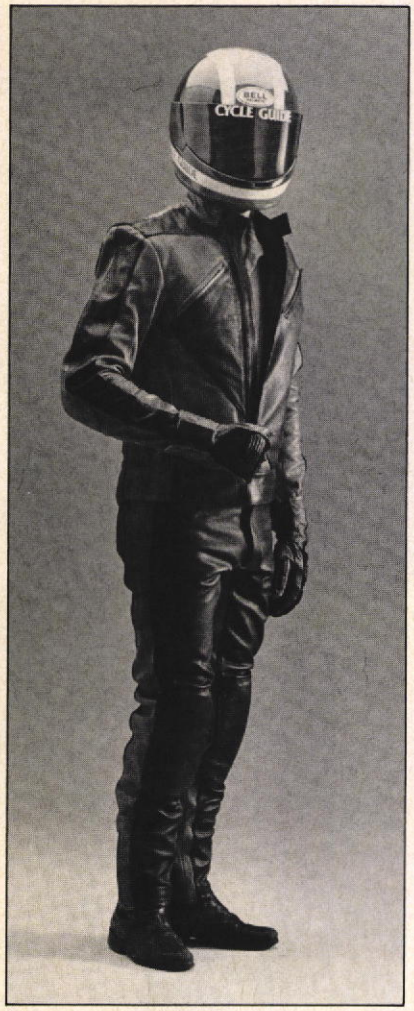
Do you see the "K" in this picture?

• Lately, the sportbike performance war has turned into a styling war as well. More often than not, the bike that blends these winning ingredients best enjoys great success in the marketplace, like Kawasaki's Ninja lineup, which attracts style buffs and knee-draggers alike.

To capitalize on the Ninjas' success, Kawasaki teamed up with Hein Gericke of Germany, and now offers the Phantom Leather Jacket and Pants, a two-piece set of street leathers sold exclusively by Kawasaki dealerships. While the Phantoms certainly qualify as designer Ninja-wear, however, Kawasaki wanted them to attract riders on other brands too. Consequently, Hein Gericke kept the styling connection subtle, and some imagination is needed to detect the stylized "K" on the front and rear of the Phantom Jacket.

Beyond their multi-brand styling, the Phantoms are designed to be multipurpose, as well. Hein Gericke took extra measures to ensure the Phantoms' comfort, without sacrificing the close fit most sport riders prefer. To that end, both the jacket and pants use elastic stretch panels underneath pleated leather on their sides, allowing a fit around the legs and torso that's both snug *and* comfortable. Further, the Phantom pants use a stretch panel in the waist's rear portion, where the jacket and pants zip together, to prevent the insidious crotch creep common to sporting riding postures. All this elastic, combined with the Phantom's smooth nylon lining and *seven* pockets, put the Phantom suit at the top in terms of comfort and convenience.

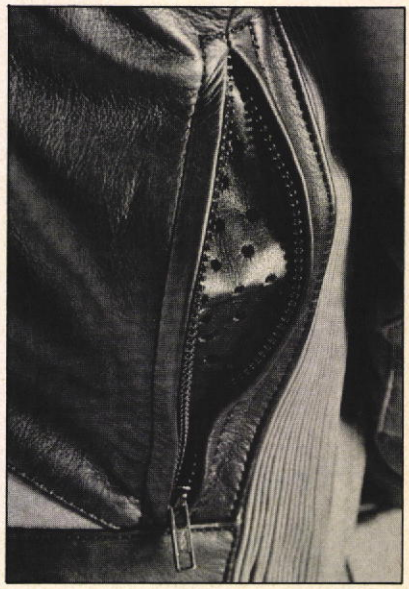
And, to make that comfort an all-season feature, the Phantom Jacket has both insulation *and* ventilation. Consisting of two large zippered openings front and rear, the venting system provides noticeable cooling, even at school-zone speeds, and at a freeway pace, temperatures above 90 degrees aren't uncomfortable. For cooler weather, a snap-in insulator vest does a good job of keeping the torso warm; unfortunately, though, the rider's arms feel naked in comparison, which limits the Phantom's cold-weather usefulness.



Phantoms' stylish hide benefits sportriders

Zippered vents quell the heat of battle.

Another limitation to the Phantoms is their actual protective qualities. The pants' knee padding, for example, is a thin layer of soft foam with leather stitched over it, not the dense foam-rubber padding found in some leathers. What's more, dragging a knee only briefly exposed the foam pad, because the leather's stitching buffed through immediately. Also, some of the stitching on the jacket *and* pants unravelled all by itself, which not only casts more doubt on the Phantoms' protective quality, but is disappointing for a $460 set of leathers.



But if your riding style makes knee-dragging a rarity, and doesn't require racetrack-quality protection, the Phantoms might still be a good choice—provided you're good with a needle and thread. The Phantom Jacket, which is available separately, does offer superb ventilation, and the suit is certainly a step above denim in protection, both of which can make riding more enjoyable. Nonetheless, in creating street leathers aimed right at the Ninjaphiles, Kawasaki missed a few—specifically, those who use *both* of the Ninja's winning ingredients.

—Mike Gillies

Kawasaki Phantom Jacket and Pants
Distributor: Kawasaki dealers nationwide. Manufacturered by Hein Gericke.
Sizes: jacket, 36–48 men's sizes and 32–42 women's sizes; pants, 28–38 men's sizes and 6–16 women's sizes
Suggested retail prices: jacket, $262 for men and $240 for women; pants, $199 for men and $184 for women
Available colors: black on red, or black on gray with red piping

La Carrera: THE MEXICAN

N ROAD RACE

BY JIM MILLER

How do you say "Isle of Man" in Spanish?

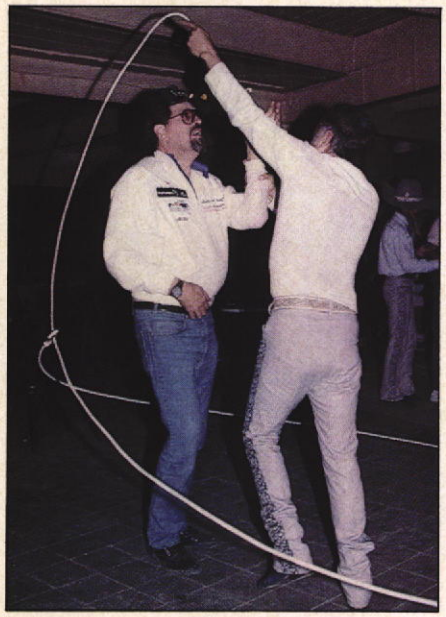
By the time Jeff Smith called me, I knew I was stuck.

"Hey Miller, I understand you're running La Carrera this year," he noted, and I recognized the tone. Smith has a remarkable knack for making the baldest statement of fact sound like some kind of challenge. In this case, the only thing missing was the soft slap of leather as the gauntlet hit the floor.

To steal a line from Mark Twain, I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said, "Huh?" Jeff went on to explain that he'd spoken to Loyal Truesdale, La Carrera co-promoter and flimflam man extraordinaire, who had noted my name on the list of entrants. The explanation, of course, was quite simple: When Kawasaki's Stewart Thomas had offered to supply an EX500 to CYCLE GUIDE to run the race across Baja, I said we'd be interested, thinking I could finagle Gingerelli, Cook or Gillies into it. My name was there just to fill in the blank.

Smith didn't see it that way, however, and figured that the magazine would lose face if I backed out, particularly when, in the interest of full disclosure, he would have no choice but to tout my reneging in his next column. In this magazine. For which he would expect money. When Gingerelli concurred that I should ride, I began to realize there was no way out.

Now the whole thing might not seem like such a big deal, except that I had never turned a wheel in any pavement competition before, and my off-road excursions were not the sort that I'd wish to continue them. Besides, riding over unknown roads at 125 mph, through a country renown for poor pavement and worse drivers, didn't seem like a particularly good choice to break my lifelong abstinence. Add to it that the menu at Taco Bell taxes my knowledge of Spanish and the whole idea seemed just a bit half-baked. The fact that the Mexican Federales were *supposed* to keep the highway closed meant little; my one consolation was that most of the farmers along the route were probably too poor to bribe their way onto the road.



I realized I should have known better than to trust someone named Carruthers to refrain from racing.

Strolling through the Bahia parking lot on race day did little to quell my fears. La Carrera has been touted as sort of an informal race, more like an organized Sunday ride, but some of the hardware said otherwise—I mean, when was the last time someone showed up on a kneeler sidecar for a Sunday ride? At least I knew Smith wouldn't take home top honors in this year's Sidecar class. Even after I'd suited up I still felt out of place. The brand-new red-and-white Dainese leathers sported a virgin pair of kneepads, something I need like Dolly Parton needs a padded bra. I couldn't even fade into the background; with Ensenada's dingy downtown as a backdrop, I stood out like a cardinal in a junkyard.

As I lined up for the start with the rest of the EX500 entourage—Paul Carruthers (Cycle News), Mike Vaughan (Kawasaki), Mitch Boehm (Motorcyclist) and Newport

Continued

La Carrera

Beach restrauteur Allen Greeley—I tried to think of the whole thing as nothing more than a sport ride rather than a race. Paul and I had agreed to ride together, just to dull the competitive edge.

That agreement lasted until we were flagged off; as we bounced the twins off the rev-limiters between gears, I realized I should have known better than to trust someone named Carruthers to refrain from racing. Still, as soon as the bike arced through the first turn, all the dire warnings ("The road's covered with diesel fuel 12 kilometers out; two guys threw it away on the prerun.") disappeared quicker than a crapshooter's last dollar.

As did most of my trepidations. The road, as it turned out, was marked clearly enough for a blind drunk in a Winnebago—which is only appropriate, since much of the traffic on Highway 3 consists of American tourists. Moreover, the pavement looked like it had been swept the night before. After I realized that the locals only clustered around the really dangerous corners (forget the racing, they wanted to see someone crash), it was pretty easy to tell which corners required caution.

I decided that Kawasaki would appreciate getting its bike back unscathed—probably almost as much as I'd appreciate getting back with my body unbroken.

And when it comes down to it, there aren't that many corners involved. The race runs 115 miles across Baja, and except for a couple of widely spaced twisty sections, the majority of the miles are dead straight, throttle-to-the-stop. Oddly enough, those were the only miles that caused me any problems, when the wind came up and nearly shoved me off into the desert at better than 120 mph. When it happened a second time, I decided that Kawasaki would appreciate getting its bike back unscathed—probably almost as much as I'd appreciate getting back with my body unbroken. By assumed mutual consent, I dialed it back.

Even at that, I finished eighth in class, 28th overall, which struck me as respectable for a first time out. As it turned out, the EX500 was perfect for La Carrera. The half-liter Kawasaki devastated the Open-500 twin class, finishing 1-5 and gathering seven of the top 10 class positions. What's more, three of our group (Boehm, Greeley and Carruthers) nailed down top-10 finishes overall, with one more EX500 (Olin Daunell) finishing fourth overall. The only casualty we suffered was Vaughan, who drifted into an embankment, the result of "sheer brain fade," he said afterward. He came away with a gorfed-up knee, a torched set of leathers, and an EX bruised nearly as badly as his ego.

As for me, I came away with better appreciation for Baja, and an appetite for cross-country racing and Mexican beer. And a better eye toward class regulations. Looking over the results, I noticed there were only two entries in the vintage twins class, which makes it tempting to get my old KR750 running. . . . If nothing else, I should be able to beat Smith's Beemer, and that alone might make it worthwile. ●

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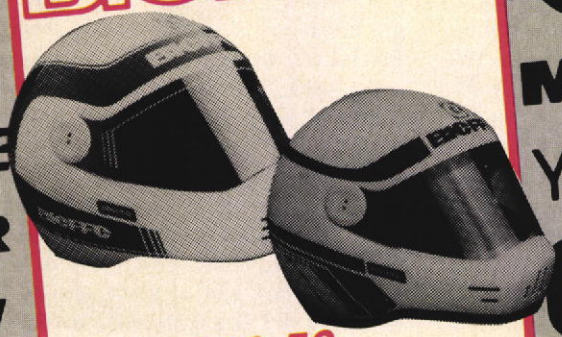

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ON-TRACK:

The First Time's The Best

Project Boss Stock Revisited.

BY MIKE GILLIES

I hate to break it to you, but if you're pushing the limits of your late-model sportbike on public roadways, chances are you're covering ground much too quickly to handle every emergency situation the street can throw at you. And there's a good reason for that: Your streetbike is more than just a streetbike, it's a racebike in disguise, and as such is capable of speeds that should only be explored in the relative safety of racing conditions. But these days, even average sportbikes inspire enough confidence to make absurd speeds feel safe. That's why, sooner or later, the infinite dangers of fast street riding scare many die-hards into slowing down. There's an alternative to backing off, though—club racing.

Having survived more than my share of potentially disastrous encounters with oblivious motorists—some of them other *motorcyclists*—I decided to stop playing the odds on the street and go racing. At first, I wasn't sure if my three years of motocross racing and the hours spent testing for CYCLE GUIDE at Willow Springs Raceway guaranteed I was ready to roadrace. But a day at Keith Code's California Superbike School at Sears Point Raceway satisfied my curiosity. The Code school makes yearly rounds of several U.S. tracks, offering both a standard and an advanced class, where students learn specific drills to refine their racing technique and eliminate problems that could limit their potential on the track.

I left Code's advanced class absolutely hooked on the idea of roadracing. My fears of being a rolling obstacle on the track disappeared, and in the few months after my training at the Code school, I had won enough races at Willow Springs in my *mind* to put me in the points lead. Somewhere enroute to Willow for the Saturday practice session of Round One of the AFM South's 1987 season, though, I black-flagged the race in my brain just long enough to remind myself to use my eyes and ears more than my imagination—I still had plenty of learning to do.

For instance, I had figured on running the recommended tire pressures in the FZ600 I'd borrowed from Yamaha for my racing debut; I didn't know how quickly a tire that's a few psi low would overheat, and if I hadn't paid attention during the AFM's New Riders School, I might have torched the FZ600's new Hi-Sports before Sunday morning. With advice from the Michelin man in the pits, I found the perfect cold tire pressures, and once out on the track the Hi-Sports provided more traction than I felt comfortable using in practice.

As I took my first warm-up laps Sunday morning just before the 600 Modified Production race—where I'd pit my basically stock FZ against a pack of bikes equipped with slicks, headers and who knows what else—I tried not to worry about the cautious approach to testing traction I'd taken on Saturday; as a matter of fact, I tried not to think about anything. Parked on my grid position, in the second-to-last row of what seemed like twenty, I did exactly what I used to do before a motocross: With my eyes closed, I counted slowly from five to zero. This self-hypnotic trick always helps me relax, and, trust me, calmness is the only way to deal with what happened next.

From the moment the starter waved the green flag to until about halfway through the cool-down lap, my brain didn't generate a single conscious thought, only reactions. Everything seemed to happen automatically, and it was only afterward that I remembered

Continued

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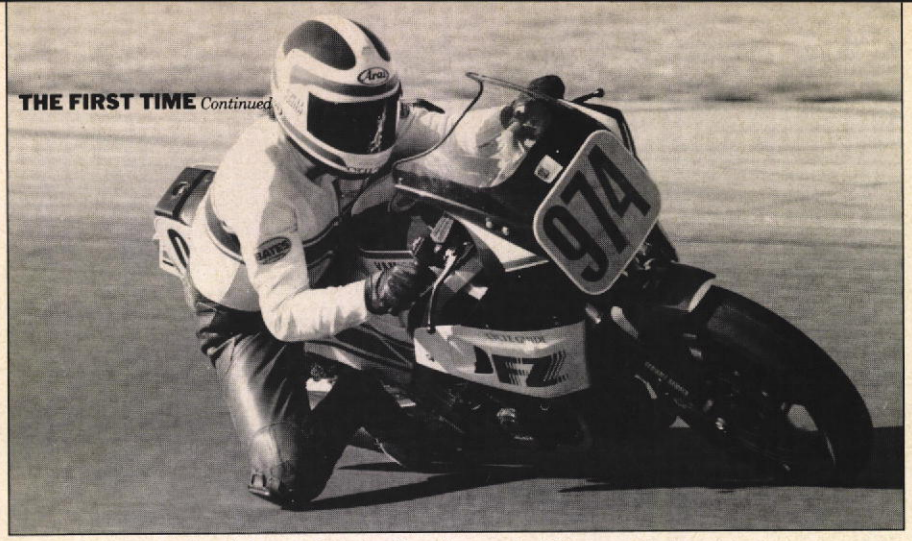
CYCLE GUIDE
YAMAHA
FZ
974



CYCLE GUIDE's novice clubracer, hanging it out in search of the ragged edge

Making the grade in Roadracing 101, and avoiding the school of hard knocks.

things like flinging the FZ into Turn Two and riding right near the Hi-Sports' limits all the way through. I'd pulled the proverbial screws loose, and I'd never ridden faster or passed as many people. I finished 20th, and I was *ecstatic*. As we gave the FZ a post-race once-over, Jim Miller kept looking for air under my boots—he *swore* I was floating—and I kept grinning foolishly and saying "Yep, this roadracing stuff really agrees with me." My second race of the day, Stock Production, was the same thing all over again—an unbroken flow of concentration, followed by sheer euphoria in the pits.

After a few days to come down from the adrenaline I'd generated on raceday, CYCLE GUIDE Editorial Assistant Rosenbelt Villanueva and I started talking about Round Two. With a black belt in Motorcycle Mechanics from L.A.'s Trade Tech almost in hand, Rose, as he's known around CG, had more than a few ideas on how to squeeze the most out of our FZ's powerplant. After a few days at Trade Tech's facility, the FZ's engine was in perfect health, having undergone everything from a compression check to an exhaust gas analysis.

Rose made countless other refinements to the FZ, too, and on raceday he trekked up to Willow to see the results. I couldn't have been happier about them; from what Rose told me about the FZ's state of tune, I *needed* professional help. What's more, he wasn't about to risk letting me touch anything other than the FZ's controls, so I was free to concentrate on racing.

That freedom, and sorting out the FZ's handling with a few aftermarket pieces (see sidebar), has been invaluable in my struggle to the top ten. With each successive month, I've shaved one, sometimes *two* seconds off my previous lap record. Prior to racing, I'd never rounded Willow in less than 1 minute 43 seconds. But in Round Four of the AFM South's 1987 season, I turned a number of 1:37's, and one I-don't-know-how-I-did-it 1:35; those times carried me and the basically stock FZ600 from 14th to 8th in a field of more than 40 modified bikes.

That kind of methodical preparation and the ability to chart your progress simply isn't possible in street riding. As a result of my initial exposure to *real* roadracing, now I fully understand what Wes Cooley once said to me while we were out street testing for CYCLE GUIDE. "When you've seen the outer edge on a racetrack," he said, "you'll realize there's no such thing as fast street riding." •

Production Racing Prep

Son, back in the old days, we had to build *our racebikes.*

• Mechanically, the last few years have been quite kind to the up-and-budgeting club racer. Thanks to the current trend toward street-legal racebikes, it's never been easier—or less costly—to turn a sportbike into a competitive roadracing mount.

Of course, some bikes need more work than others to make the transition from street to track. If you don't already have a bike that you plan to race, an important consideration in buying one is the required maintenance—both preparatory and periodic—for racing. That's particularly true if you're short on mechanical genius, money or both.

Yamaha's FZ600 is the epitome of a low-maintenance racer, evidenced by its widespread popularity in club racing. With a straightforward air-cooled engine and its roomy, easy-access frame, maintenance on an FZ is as easy as it gets in the four-cylinder class. What's more, the FZ's simple layout made race-prep a two-afternoon job. First, we gave the FZ the most basic of tuneups: an oil change with a new filter, and a set of spark plugs; to prevent preignition under constant high-rpm loads, we installed plugs one heat range cooler than stock. Next, with the AFM Rule Book in hand, we removed everything the Stock Production rules required us to—headlights, mirrors, turn-signals, etc.—plus other unnecessary bits that weren't mentioned in the rules—the chain guard, speedometer cable, helmet lock and so on. The rules also required us to saftey-wire the critical nuts and bolts; while the rules vary from club to club, you can count on wiring the brake calipers, exhaust system, and all of the engine's oil and coolant fittings.

With those racetrack-safety items out of the way, our FZ was only a set of numberplates away from passing the AFM's tech inspection, and qualifing as a real-life racebike. Still, passing tech says nothing about a bike's competitiveness, and mounting a set of high-quality, DOT-certified tires is the first step toward competitive lap times. For our FZ, we chose a known quantity: Michelin Hi-Sports. For more than two years, Hi-Sports have been the standard in production racing tires, both for traction *and* durability—the qualities to look for if good lap times and saving money are your main priorities.

With some experience under their belt, though, most racers shift their priorities toward *winning*, and for many riders, that means making every modification the rules—and their budget—will allow. We chose a more rational, step-by-step process, correcting only the problems that no amount of rider skill—or nerve—could overcome. To do that, we settled on three basic modifications: an Ohlins shock, a set of Lockhart Pro Rate fork springs, and SBS high-friction front brake pads. Together, these changes have been key elements in successfully passing a number of the more powerful 600s (i.e., Hurricanes), which has at least made winning a realistic goal.

All of which fits in perfectly with our grand scheme for production racing: maximum fun at minimum expense. And thanks to the current crop of race-bred sportbikes, a cost-conscious effort in 1987 won't net you a second-string ride, or keep you out of the winner's circle.

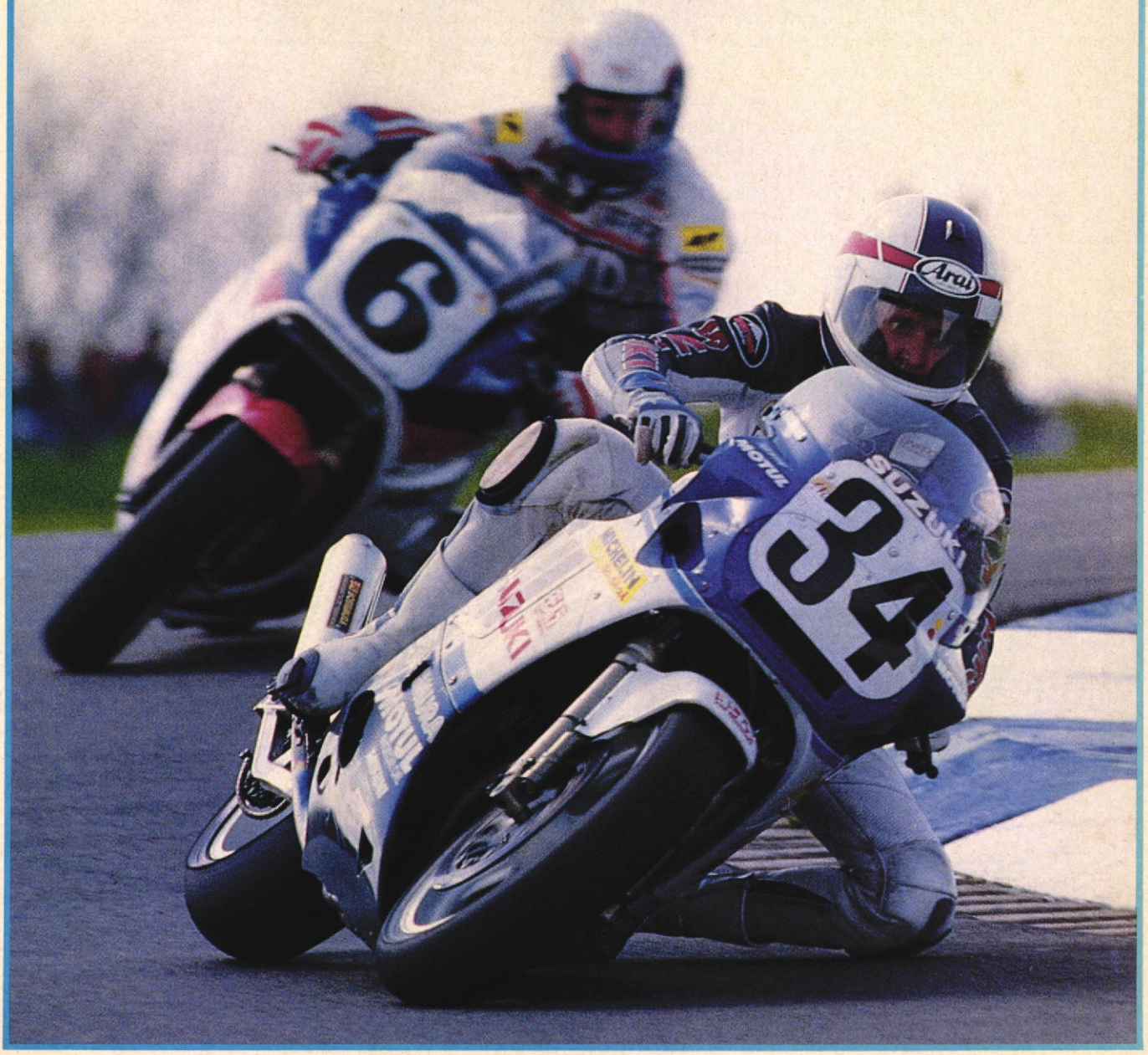
—Mike Gillies

SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

The Battle of Britain

Schwantz and Rainey blast the Brits in the Trans-Atlantic Challenge.



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Continued

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American top gun, Wayne Rainey (6) shoots into the lead, followed closely by teammates Schwantz (34) and Goodfellow (11)

While the first three places were already decided, the race turned into a real shooting match for the rest of the field.

• When the 17th Annual Trans-Atlantic Challenge started, America's two Top Guns, Wayne Rainey and Kevin Schwantz, had trouble identifying the enemy. Early in the nine-race series, Schwantz and Rainey were so busy dogfighting each other that they forgot who the opposition was, in this case the Great Britain team. But eventually, Schwantz and Rainey settled down to lead the squadron of nine U.S. riders to victory in the Easter Match Series, an annual slugfest that pits the Queen's corps of roadracers against the colonials from this side of The Pond.

While Rainey and Schwantz had no trouble dispatching opposition, they almost blew each other out of the sky. The two Americans so dominated the competition that no other rider won a single race in the series. But it took the first three rounds at Brands Hatch before the two Yanks under-

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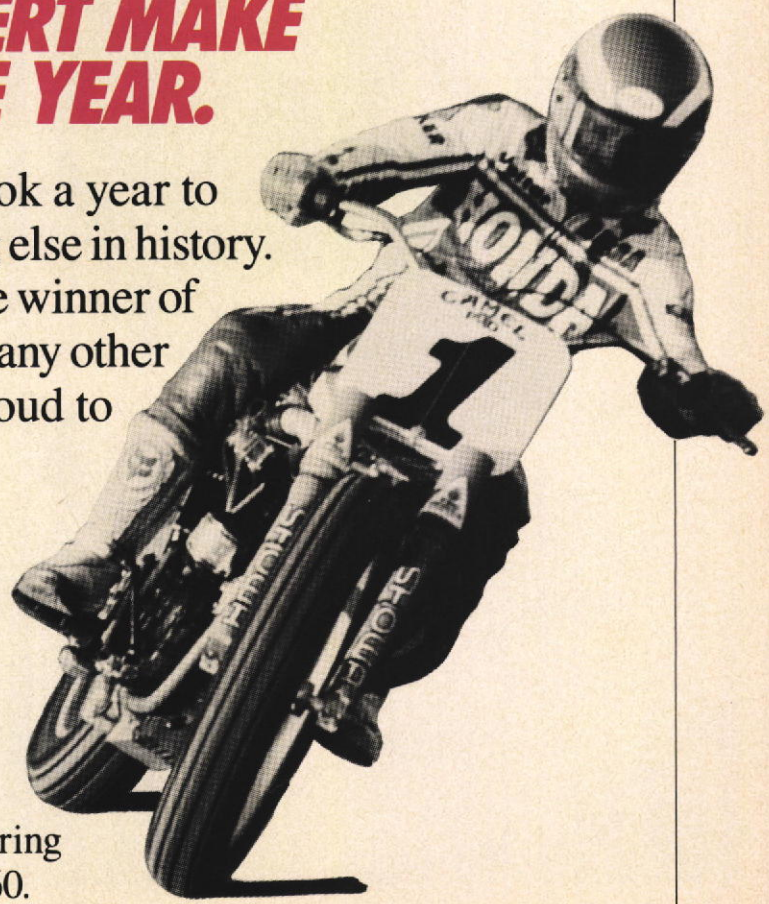

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stood that it was *the other guys* they were battling, not each other.

Rainey and Schwantz left the rest of the Anglo-American pack at the grid, checking their knickers for Race One. And while the rest of the field dumbfoundedly examined their Fruit of the Looms, Rainey and Schwantz instituted a 10-lap session of banging fairings, and otherwise getting into each other's way around the twisty circuit. By race end, Schwantz put his Yoshimura-Suzuki ahead of Rainey's Honda VFR750 for good, which left the score one to nothing in favor of Schwantz. Meanwhile the rest of the colonials pushed the redcoats to the back of the field, and the U.S. team opened a sizable point lead, one it never relinquished during the stay in England.

Rainey was the ace, with five wins

But he was second in scoring.

Act Two, Brands Hatch: Things really heated up between the two Top Guns, and for 10 laps, they rattled sabers until Schwantz bumped Rainey, got sideways, and nearly crashed. Finally, Schwantz settled for second. Rainey wasn't satisfied with just a win, and accused the Suzuki rider of making more than an occasional "stupid" move during their dice. The Americans increased their points lead, but there was still no unity on the team.

Rain cooled their tempers during Saturday's practice sessions at Donington Park, allowing the U.S. team to regroup, and understand that it was a *team* effort. Even so, Rainey and Schwantz couldn't shake each other in the racing, and they traded wins the remaining six rounds, with the Honda rider gaining the advantage—five wins to Schwantz's four—while the lanky Texan prevailed in points, 165 to 161.5. That settled the *Battle* of Britain. As for the war, the colonials prevailed again (only the sixth time, not counting The Original Trans-Atlantic Challenge of 1776, compared to GB's 11 previous decisions) 933.5 to Great Britain's 745.5.

The Trans-Atlantic Challenge probably will prove to be a preview for the remainder of the Camel Pro Series (Superbike edition), too. When Rainey and Schwantz went nose-to-nose at Road Atlanta, Georgia, their Easter Weekend dress rehearsal proved a success. Neither rider forgot his lines, and the pair again finished one-two; Rainey one, Schwantz two. With eight Superbike rounds to go, the word is out: Take no prisoners. Just as it was during the Battle of Britain.

Jolly Goodfellow

• Gary Goodfellow stands a chance of losing his New Zealand passport. Goodfellow, you see, could be considered a traitor to his country and The Empire. It was disrupting that he moved his household last year to America so he could race in the AMA's Superbike series. But when he signed up to fight on the *American* side for the Trans-Atlantic Challenge, well, that was going too far. Especially considering that New Zealand is part of the Queen's Commonwealth of Nations.

Goodfellow's switch was, to be sure, a blessing for the Yanks. After a shaky start in the first round when his tires overheated, he went on to post a string of third-place finishes behind the Rainey/Schwantz warhead, earning him No. 3 in final scoring (146 points). Coupled with Doug Polen's 115.5 (fifth overall) and Michel Mercier's (another traitor to the Commonwealth, from Canada) sixth-place, the U.S. team was assured an easy win over the Brits.

Should New Zealand suspend Goodfellow's citizenship, rest assured that he'll be welcomed with open arms in the States. Especially every Easter when the U.S. Expeditionary Forces travel overseas to battle some of the best roadracers in the world. —*Dain Gingerelli*

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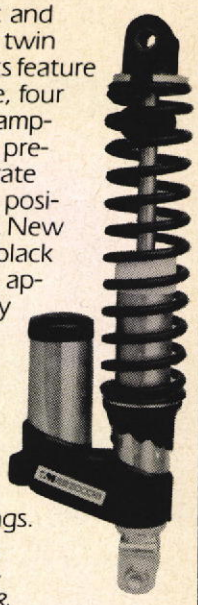

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ROADRACING:

Formula USA

It's run whatchabrung at Willow Springs.

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Scott Gray, riding a Yoshimura Tornado, won the first Formula USA race at Willow Springs

Riding the wind to a win; the Yosh-Suzuki proved too powerful for the rest of the field, and blew them away.

• Following a lengthy divorce with the AMA, Formula 1 finally changed its name. It's now known as Formula USA. It even has a new suitor, the Willow Springs Racing Association.

With the new relationship comes a new image for Formula 1, er, USA. The familiar field of two-stroke fairing flyers that comprised the F1 ranks only a year ago are gone. The new Formula caters to bikes with any size and type of engine. Essentially, the only limitation for the class is that the motorcycles have only two wheels.

Bill Huth is the matchmaker for F/USA and the WSRA. He's also the owner of Willow Springs Raceway, where the F/USA will do all its courting this year. The basis of the class, as Huth recalls in his slow, Texas-like drawl was, "to make a class for the guys with their Formula 1 bikes. But I wanted to make it (the new class) even better." To that end, F/USA is a class for, as Huth puts it "anybody to race in."

Anybody includes owners of bikes with liter-plus displacement engines, turbochargers or superchargers, or even those running exotic fuels such as alcohol and nitromethane. With those wide-open rules, Formula USA became more than a haven for orphaned F1 bikes and riders; it transformed into a hot-rodders delight, a place where a tuner lets his imagination run wild, in hopes that his bike and rider will run even wilder on the track.

Huth wanted to make the F/USA Series easy for spectators to understand and follow, too, so he limited it to six race dates. Each race falls on the first Sunday of the month, beginning with the April opener. F/USA racing is suspended in July and August in deference to the desert heat, then resumes for the conclusion of the season during the cooler autumn months.

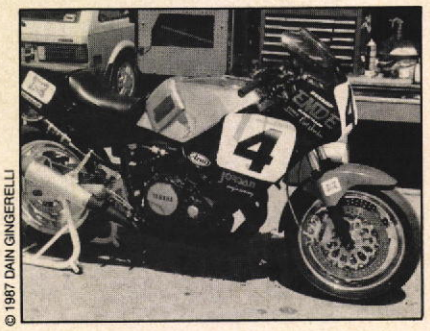
This year's season opener was won by Scott Gray, riding a Yoshimura-prepared Suzuki GSX-R1100. Gray's F/USA racer mirrored Huth's expectations for the class, too. Tucked inside its Yoshimura Tornado

Alcoholics Anonymous

• Curt Jordan has an alcohol problem. Not because his Yamaha FZ750 (actually, 840cc) sports Miller High Life Beer decals on the seat and fairing, but because Jordan burns the volatile fuel in his racebike's engine.

Though he'll continue to leave the riding chores to Dave Emde, Jordan's racing plans include further changes to the bike. Eventually he hopes to take Bill Huth's F/USA rules to the limit, and burn alcohol "with 10 percent nitro."

Of course, Jordan, who owns Jordan Engineering of Santa Ana, California, isn't just going to let his FZ chug-a-lug the booze without proper supervision. The engine will be tuned specifically for the fuel, including an 870cc piston kit, Carrillo rods, and electronic fuel-injection that Jordan will pirate from an older Kawasaki GPz1100.



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To make sure there's enough money on tap, Jordan rounded up other sponsors in addition to Miller Brewing: RK Chain, SuperTrapp and Air Tech Streamlining. After all, if Jordan sipped his alcohol alone, then he'd *really* be considered a problem drinker.

—Dain Gingerelli

bodyware was a 154-horsepower (at the countershaft) 1052cc engine that, according to Pop Yoshimura's stateside spokesman, Suehiro Watanabe, had "some minor head work, Stage 1 cams, Mikuni 38mm flat-slide carburetors, and our (Yoshimura) pipe."

It was enough to net Gray not only a win, but the F/USA lap record, 1:27.2. Less than a second now stands between him and the absolute motorcycle lap record, owned by Randy Mamola when he clocked 1:26.4 on his Suzuki RG500 around the 2.5-mile course in 1982.

When Gray heard his times after the race, he was surprised. "Twenty-seven two? Normally you're sliding around (at those lap times), but the Michelin tires held up good." And, as he pointed out there was really no need to go faster, since his nearest competitor, defending USA champ, Earl Roloff, was several seconds back.

Roloff's USA bike was less radical. He rode a slightly modified Kawasaki Ninja 1000, a bike one onlooker described as "The world's heaviest Formula 1 bike," proof that F1 die-hards still consider Huth's class the last bastion for the dearly beloved American-style GP bikes. Immediately after the race, Roloff put his race program on a diet, and ordered a lighter Yamaha FZR1000 for the remainder of the series.

Roloff's role at the opening round of the F/USA series stretched beyond being the champ with an overweight F1 bike. He also showed other riders that it is possible to gain outside sponsorship—from companies not financially connected to motorcycling—for their F/USA racers. Backing Roloff for the year is Coors Lite beer.

Ironically, Budweiser, co-sponsor (with Toyota) of the series, actually welcomes Coors and other breweries to F/USA racing. The way the Bud Men see it, additional sponsorship benefits the riders, who in turn can put that money into their equipment to make a better class, which will lead to a better show, thus putting Budweiser back into the limelight. Simple marketing tactics, to be sure. Besides, Budweiser had last year's series runner-up, Jim Vreeke, on tap, co-sponsoring with Kerker his Yamaha FZ750.

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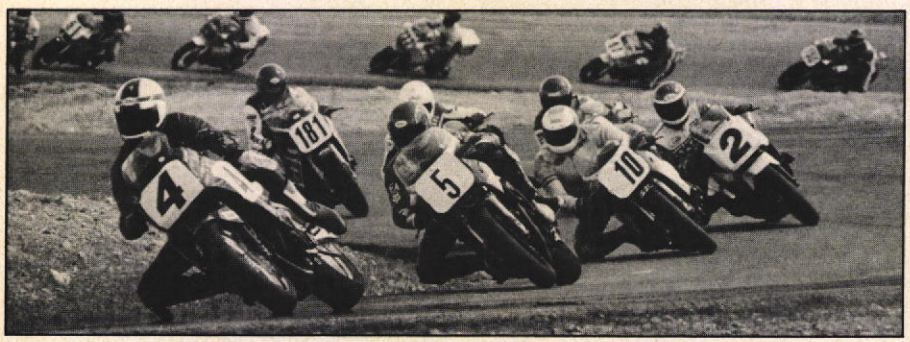
Coors sponsors Roloff

While Budweiser backs the series.

If it sounds like F/USA is a bit lower key than other types of racing, you're getting the picture. There were 35 entries for the first race, and after 10 laps of racing, the front five finishers were smiling and shaking hands in victory circle as if they were attending a 10-lap *reunion*. Gray was happy about winning, Roloff was pleased with his performance, and third-place finisher James Domay was ecstatic that he motored his GSX-R1100 past the dicing duo of Dave Emde and Chris Steward.

The Steward/Emde fracas was another story in itself. The verdict was handed down on the final go-round, with judgment in favor of Emde. Later, Emde, who used to bang fairings with Steward in Formula 2 races a couple of years ago, exclaimed in victory circle, "It was just like the old days, bumping elbows with Chris."

The top five USAers had even more reason to cheer. They all won money. In fact, the top 15 riders made the payroll, with Gray accounting for $1000. And if the Yoshimura rider continues to storm his way through the F/USA field on his Tornado this season, he stands to win a Toyota pickup and a hefty sum of cash reserved for the champion. Even the 15th-place finisher of the series picks up a $1000 check. As Emde, who was born and raised in San Diego, put it, "It's good racing, and you don't even have to leave California to make money."


© 1987 JOSE LUIS SANCHEZ GIL

A pack of F/USA hot-rods head up the hill to Turn Four

"It's good racing, and you don't even have to leave California to make money."

MV's Return

Ago has a go at it again.

• There was a time when Grand Prix roadrace bikes were devoid of sponsor's decals. But that was when GP bikes had treaded tires, and their alloy rims were laced with wire spokes to hubs with drum brakes, and two shock absorbers graced the rear suspension. And practically every 500cc GP bike used a four-stroke engine for power; two-strokes were considered tiddler-class material.

Those days are gone, and so are many of the bikes. But a few collectors have retained some of the machinery, even restoring the bikes to their former glory. Perhaps the most legendary bike from that bygone era is Italy's MV Augusta.

MV doesn't make racebikes anymore, but the marque won more world championships—38 in all—than any other brand. Included in its GP repertoire are 12 titles and 110 wins by Giacomo Agostini. Agostini, who now heads Team Marlboro-Yamaha, raced MVs in the defunct 350cc, and the prestigious 500cc classes.

Ago, as he was better known during the '60s and '70s, was given a lap of honor aboard one of the old MVs at a pre-race ceremony

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Agostini makes his lap of honor

Arrivaderci, bambinos.

during the 1986 Assen TT in Holland. The 13-time world champion didn't ride the red-and-silver triple hard—in fact, he wasn't even wearing a helmet during his parade lap—but in one respect he did bring the bike up to current GP standards; before the old four-stroke engine fired to life, Ago insisted on affixing a Marlboro sticker to its windscreen, and Michelin logos to the fork tubes. Which just goes to show, some bikes never grow old, they just change with the times.

—Dain Gingerelli

Continued

ROADRACING:

Honda NR750

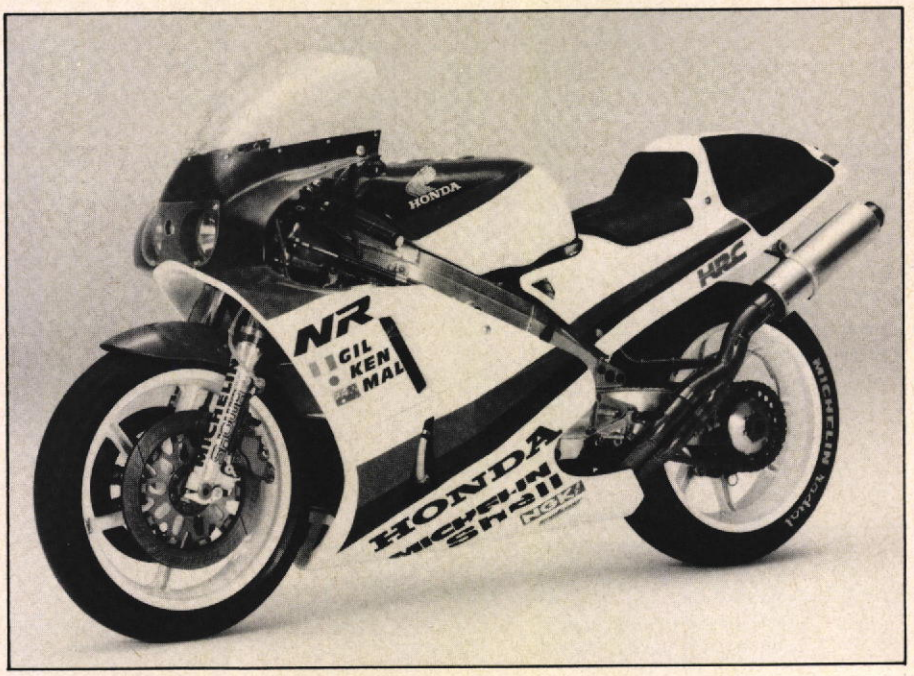
Another oval-piston wonder comes 'round.

• Honda still believes in oval pistons. Most recent proof is the NR750, a vee-four engine based on the ill-fated NR500 Grand Prix racer of 1979. And like the original NR—dubbed the "Never Ready" by the racing community—the NR750 is considered a prototype, used only to develop engine technology for Honda.

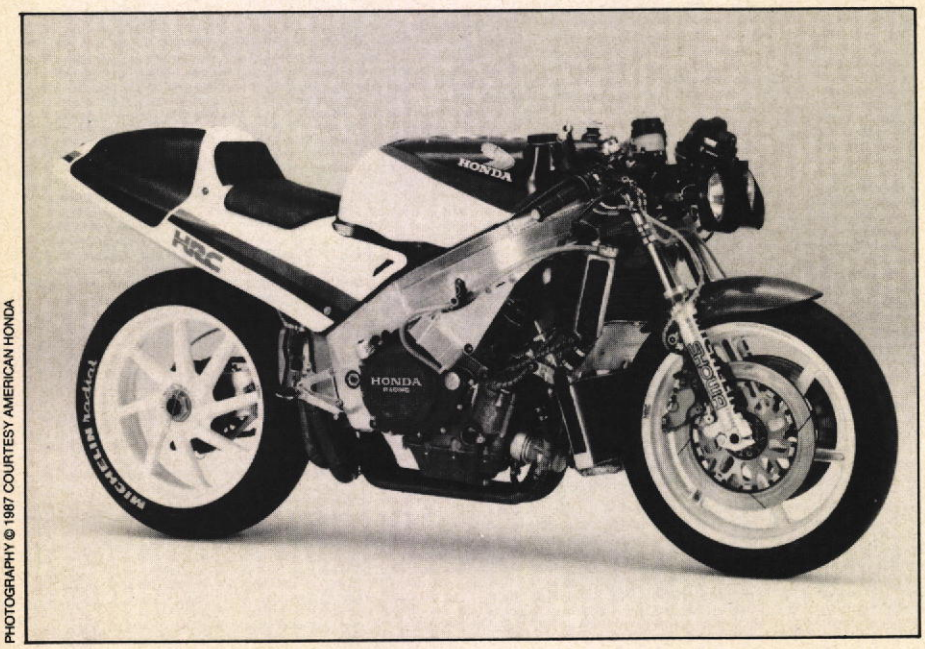
The NR750 debuted at the Le Mans 24 Hour, a non-championship event that allows non-homologated entries. And there, the new Honda was second qualifier (ridden by Australian Malcolm Campbell); the official works Honda RVF750 sat on the pole. The NR750 eventually broke a piston three hours into the all-day race, and DNFed. It was running fifth at the time.

Despite this setback, the NR750 scored high reviews from its riders. Campbell, in particular, said that the 32-valve engine sported a broad powerband, with usable power from 7000 to 14,500 rpm. Campbell, who has ridden the RVF750, indicates that the NR revs smoother and quicker than the round-piston vee-four. As for peak horsepower, Honda rated the NR750 at 150; Campbell feels that 175 hp is within reason with further modifications.

Honda released a few facts about the NR. The engine displaces 749.8cc, and has gear-driven double overhead camshafts. Each combustion chamber has two spark plugs. Keihin flat-slide carburetors nestle in the vee's trough. And like the RVF750, the NR racer has 17-inch wheels and Honda's new Pro-Arm, a single-side swingarm.

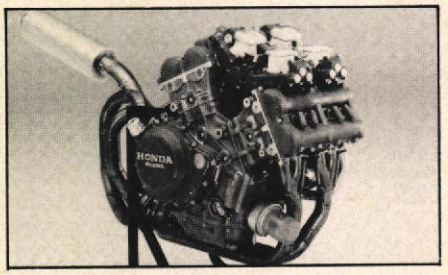


Will we see the NR750 in future championship races? Possibly. If so, count on seeing it in your dealer showroom, too. Because most race series, the World Championship of Endurance included, have homologation rules founded on production-based machinery. Odds are, at this point, of a production-based NR Honda becoming reality. If not in its current 750cc incarnation, then perhaps as a turbocharged 250cc Grand Prix racer. —*Dain Gingerelli*



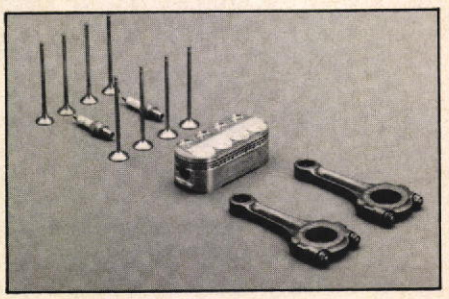
Side view shows the NR's Pro-Arm single-side swingarm

For quick changes during all-day races.



The vee-four that's really a vee-eight

Oval pistons, to stretch the point.



Eight valves, two connecting rods, and . . .

Soon to be released for production?

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Pit Bits

Wayne Gardner gets Down Under

Looking to go 2 for 1.

• Americans Down Under in Europe: If the Grand Prix season continues on its present course, look for a non-American to win the World Championship for the first time since 1982, when Marco Lucchinelli won for Suzuki. The new "foreigner" World Champion? Wayne Gardner. Gardner and his Honda NSR500 won two of the first four races—Spain and Italy—this year, taking a four-point lead over defending champ, Eddie Lawson, 43 to 39. Randy Mamola, held third with 32 points.

• Spencer in stitches: Freddie Spencer returned to GP racing at Hockenheim for the German Grand Prix, but immediately scratched himself from the program after he banged his knee on a curb marker during unofficial practice. The cut required nine stitches; Spencer subsequently packed it in, then packed his bags to return home to Louisiana without racing.

• We need Spencer? While Spencer was hobbling around in Louisiana, West German 250cc top gun, Reinhold Roth, broke his collarbone in a crash on Friday. Having qualified for the race, Roth elected to sit out practice on Saturday, resting for Sunday's race. Amid clear skies on Sunday, he rode his Honda RS250 to third. Following his iron-man performance, the chauvinistic track announcer said to the crowd, "We don't need you, Freddie Spencer."

• YZR, up in smoke: It's becoming apparent that the Honda NSR500 is better than the Yamaha YZR500 this year. While the Honda has been marginally faster on top speed, its superiority over the Yamaha is in how quickly it builds to speed, and how much easier it negotiates the corners. As one observer put it, "It basically shows who worked (harder) over the winter."

• Roberts returns: Kenny Roberts returned to the saddle of a Grand Prix roadracer at the Italian GP. The occasion was to help Mamola test a new Dunlop-developed front tire. Having missed the first practice session at Monza, KR looked like the King Kenny of old on his Lucky Strike-Yamaha during the second session, and ended up with 11th fastest time. Of course, the big question remains: Will KR return to GP racing? He says he will later in the season only if Mamola is in the points battle. Even so, it won't be easy for Roberts. As one of the Lucky Strike team members said after Roberts' ride, "He was rubbing his forearms an awful lot."

King Kenny, on the throne again

Testing the waters, and tires.

• Un-Lucky Strike: Roberts may *have* to return sooner than he thinks. Team rider Mike Baldwin is out indefintely with a broken leg and wrist, having crashed practicing for the German GP. While Roberts is certainly a candidate for the replacement ride, another name has been popping up: New Zealander Richard Scott.

• Cagiva coming: Raymond Roche rode the Cagiva vee-four to ninth-place at the Italian GP, its most impressive Grand Prix finish to date. According to sources in Europe, the Cagiva shows vast improvement. Even Roberts was overheard to say that the Italian bike should be competitive by season's end.

• Quote Department: "Rocket" Ron Haslam is known for his lightning starts on a GP bike. After his fourth-place finish at the German GP, he reflected on the race, which began as a four-way battle involving Eddie Lawson, Christian Sarron, Wayne Gardner and himself. "We got to the first corner. Wayne Gardner looked over, saw us, put his chin on the tank and left us," Haslam noted.

Continued

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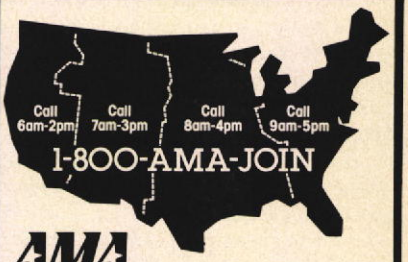

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Winners & Losers

A Look Back

The right faces in the wrong places.

• While CYCLE GUIDE's annual Bike of the Year Award commands centerstage this month, we shouldn't forget the men of the sport, either. Specifically the racers, who, more than anybody, understand that winning isn't everything. And, to that end, we'd like to salute some of the hard-luck racers that have emerged from CYCLE GUIDE's pages during the past years. Racers who, despite their heroic deeds, were overshadowed by events of more catastrophic proportion.

1. Gary Nixon: French Kiss-Off Award. A jingoistic and blantantly biased decision by a French FIM official ruled against Nixon, giving the 1976 Formula 750 World Championship to Frenchman Patrick Pons. Nixon didn't even receive a kiss after that deal.

2. Steve Baker: Yamahopper Award. Having given Yamaha the F/750 World Championship in 1977 (but not the 500cc crown), Yamaha gave Baker his walking papers for 1978. He subsequently retired as America's first roadrace World Champion, and now operates a *Kawasaki* dealership in Washington.

3. Randy Mamola: It-Hertz-To-Be-Avis Award. A favorite in every aspect, Mamola has yet to win a World Championship. No. 2 three times in his career, Mamola will surely try harder this year. His performances bear proof that championships can't be bought—or rented.

4. Yvon du Hamel: Smacks of Tarmac Award. A ferocious roadracer, du Hamel was also a legendary crasher. The gritty Canadian gave new meaning to the term "road test."

5. Dave Aldana: Du Hamel-With-A-Backtwist Award (see above).

6. Jay Springsteen: Blood and Guts Award. A mysterious illness prevented this gifted flattracker from winning a fourth CPS title. Springer has had plenty of intestinal fortitude, not to mention intestinal illnesses, in his prime.

7. Dennis Manning: Fastest Standing Still Award. More than ready to challenge the Land Speed Record, Mother Nature has rained on Manning's high-speed parade four years in a row. He's certainly not the Sundance Kid.

8. Brad Lackey: Bridge Over The River Why Award. Lackey burned a few bridges in his quest for the World Championship, ultimately stranding himself without a ride when it came time to wear No. 1. Even so, he left his mark on American motocross.

9. Marty Moates: Glass MX Boot Award. Moates experienced motocross racing's biggest Cinderella story by winning the USGP of Carlsbad in 1980. After the clock struck 12, he resumed a path of mediocrity in motocross. At least his Yamaha didn't turn into a pumpkin.

10. CYCLE GUIDE's racing editors: In-The-Read Racing Award. In recognition of every CG editor (Bob Braverman, Walt Fulton Jr., Art Friedman, Jeff Karr, Michael Jordan, Larry Works, Dain Gingerelli, Ron Lawson, David Dewhurst, Jerry Smith, Jim Miller and Mike Gillies) who raced under the magazine's banner. Their accounts were well read, as was the magazine's.

—Dain Gingerelli

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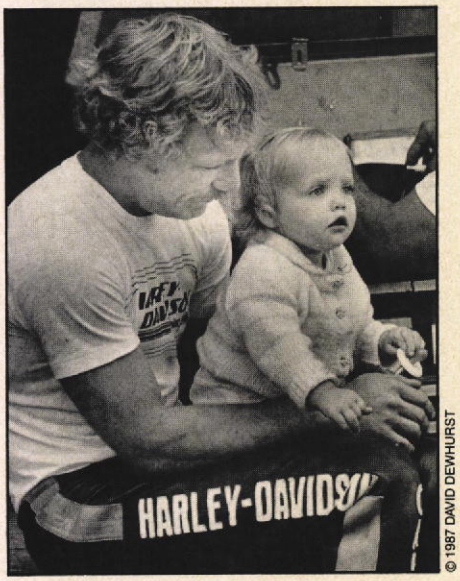
Marty Moates, USGP winner

The slipper fit . . . for a day.



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Jay Springsteen, the father

He fathered three CPS titles, too.

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Lackey, heading to his Championship

Burning bridges took its toll.

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Randy Mamola has been No. 2 three times

Three on a match, Mamola would like to strike it rich this year.

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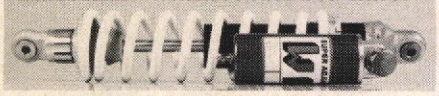

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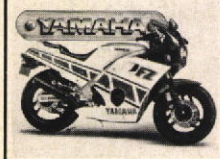

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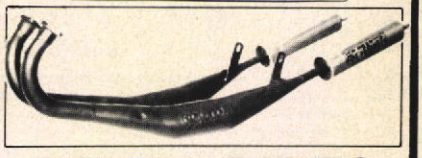

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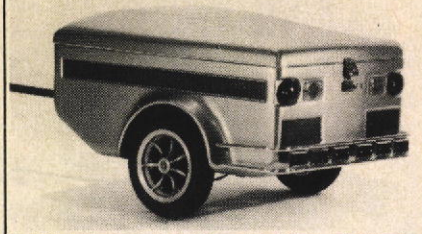

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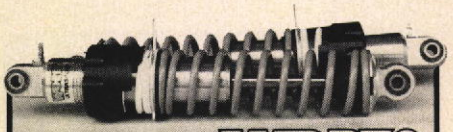

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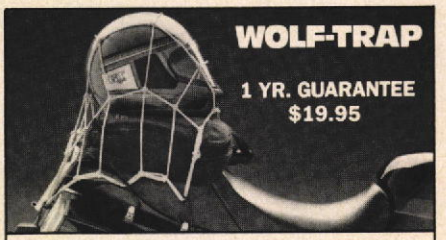

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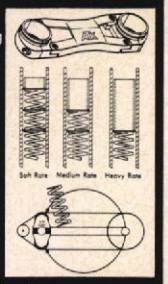

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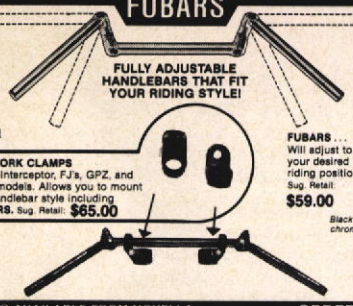

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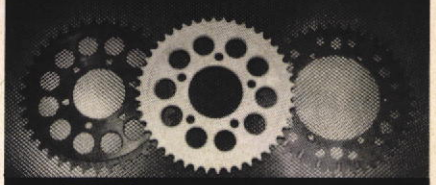

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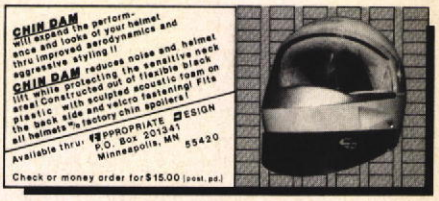
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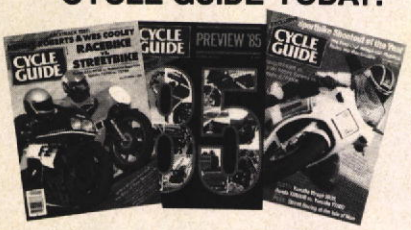

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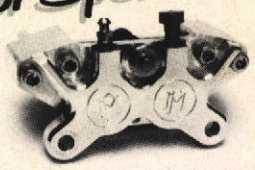

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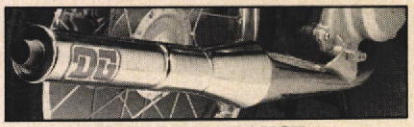

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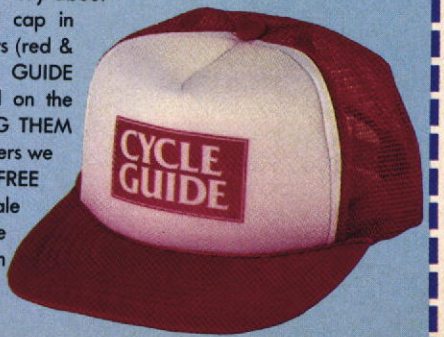

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• Putting a wrench to my old BMW R90S after a long period of neglect gave me more of a buzz than riding it has in a long time. I enjoy riding it as much as ever, but for me that's only part of the pleasure of owning a bike—and it's a good thing there's more. After all, the thing is hopelessly outdated; there are 400s around that can eat its lunch. Its garish Daytona Orange paint job is taken about as seriously in five-valve-per-cylinder society as a bark from a toothless three-legged dog.

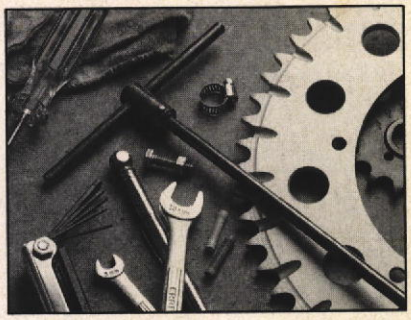
Still, I enjoy working on the old tart. The more intimate I get with its innards, the more I enjoy exercising it. And that's kind of what it comes down to: I tenderly wrench on its aging thoroughbred flesh, and then it lets me ride it some more. We aren't racing, and I know it. (Even when it was brand-new, cost more than anything else around except maybe an MV Agusta, and was the hottest ticket on the street, the S had little more in common with Udo Gietl's Daytona-winning firebreathers than the paint job and tank emblems.)

This joy of wrenching is lost on some people, like my friend, Turbo Steve. Turbo, if you'll recall, has a standing order (and credit line) with his understandably friendly local motorcycle dealer to get him the fastest and/or the most mechanically bizarre new sportbike to appear on the cover of a motorcycle magazine each year. "Just call me when it comes in," he tells the dealer.

Turbo thoroughly enjoys his bikes. Only I can spoil his fun. You see, he needs me to ride with him. That way when he stops for lunch, he'll have somebody to tell how fast he was going. But Turbo has too often found me up to my elbows in grease when he's come over to talk me into another ride-and-tell.

If I'm changing the BMW's oil, he'll tell me he knows he really should do his bike's oil changes himself, but he's just too busy so he pays the guys at the shop to do it for him. I understand, and respect, that. Then he always tells me the joke about his quarter tool kit. He claims that he throws the tool kit away first thing when he buys a new bike and tapes a quarter under the seat. That way, if the bike breaks down, he can call his mechanic.

Despite all the bravado, I know my enjoyment of working on my own bike got to him at least once. He had come over to



drag me out for a Sunday morning ride-and-lie session, only to find me changing the oil. He thought he'd try it himself. It was a noble effort, but a dismal failure. It was kind of like a guy who had only dated 18-year-old blond cheerleaders deciding to try something new, but making the change by marrying Lucrezia Borgia.

He went to Sears, whipped out his charge card, bought a $400 tool kit, stopped on the way home for three quarts of oil and a filter and ruined his life. Let's just say that he became discouraged after he removed his imported British full-race fairing, unbolted his aftermarket four-into-one exhaust system, lost all the nuts and bolts and then realized the old oil needed to be hot to do the job right.

Now this is not to say that he shouldn't have tried. I respect him for attempting something new, but I'm amused that he jumped in too deep that first time and was surprised when he didn't enjoy drowning. Doing your own wrenching is a learned thing. You have to learn how to do it, and you have to learn how to appreciate it. Turbo doesn't see it that way. He assumes those of us who enjoy working in oil have a knack for it.

Mechanical aptitude really has nothing to do with the enjoyment of wrenching. I am what one editor of this magazine refers to as a "hamfist." It is true that, at times in my life, I used to leave a trail of metal shavings and broken parts as proof of my work. In my defense, I must say, I have learned to use finesse instead of force in recent years and hence, have broken a lot fewer parts while trying to fix my bike. Hamfistedness aside, few people have as much fun working on a bike as do I. In fact, I go to great lengths to overcome, compensate or prepare for my hamfistedness. I have what is perhaps the world's largest collection of clod tools. I have all sorts of flexible shafts with remote control claws on the ends, magnets and mirrors on telescoping rods, extractors and coat hangers bent into strange shapes. They're all valuable for locating and retrieving parts that I drop into places where my fingers won't go. Why fool myself? It's a damned good thing I didn't become a brain surgeon. I would be constantly leaving hose clamps and sockets inside. I can always be counted upon to drop a small part in the smallest and most inaccessible hole in the vicinity. So, I have my collection of retrieving tools.

But there are some jobs that don't even require the use of my clod tools. I have mastered the oil change on my 90S. Getting the oil to flow out of the oil pan after I remove the drain plug is not a problem; gravity works, even for me. But changing the filter without welding my hands to the exhaust headers is to me what snatching a fly from midair with chopsticks was to Grasshopper on "Kung Fu." On the Boxer, three 10mm bolts just above the right exhaust pipe hold on the oil-filter cover. If I want to just get it done with, I'll use a socket on the end of a long extension and ratchet. If I'm in fine form, I'll use an open-end wrench—one slip and it's Me Brochette, Sizzling Sorenson, Fingers Flambé.

If that goes well and I want a bigger challenge, I'll set the timing. This requires me to work between the sizzling hot head pipes, just between the front wheel and motor. Not getting burned is out of the question. Success, or lack of it, is measured by the severity of the burns on my forearms.

Not being a natural mechanic actually is an advantage for those interested in trying to get some enjoyment out of maintaining their own bikes. I find that my limited abilities make the successful completion of even small tasks great joys. For instance, finishing any job without using a Johnson Wrench (hammer) is something of an accomplishment for me. Adjusting the valves without gashing my knuckles is a big thrill.

Should that not be enough, I can always claim that I've saved money—if I value my time at around 13 cents an hour and don't count the medical bills.

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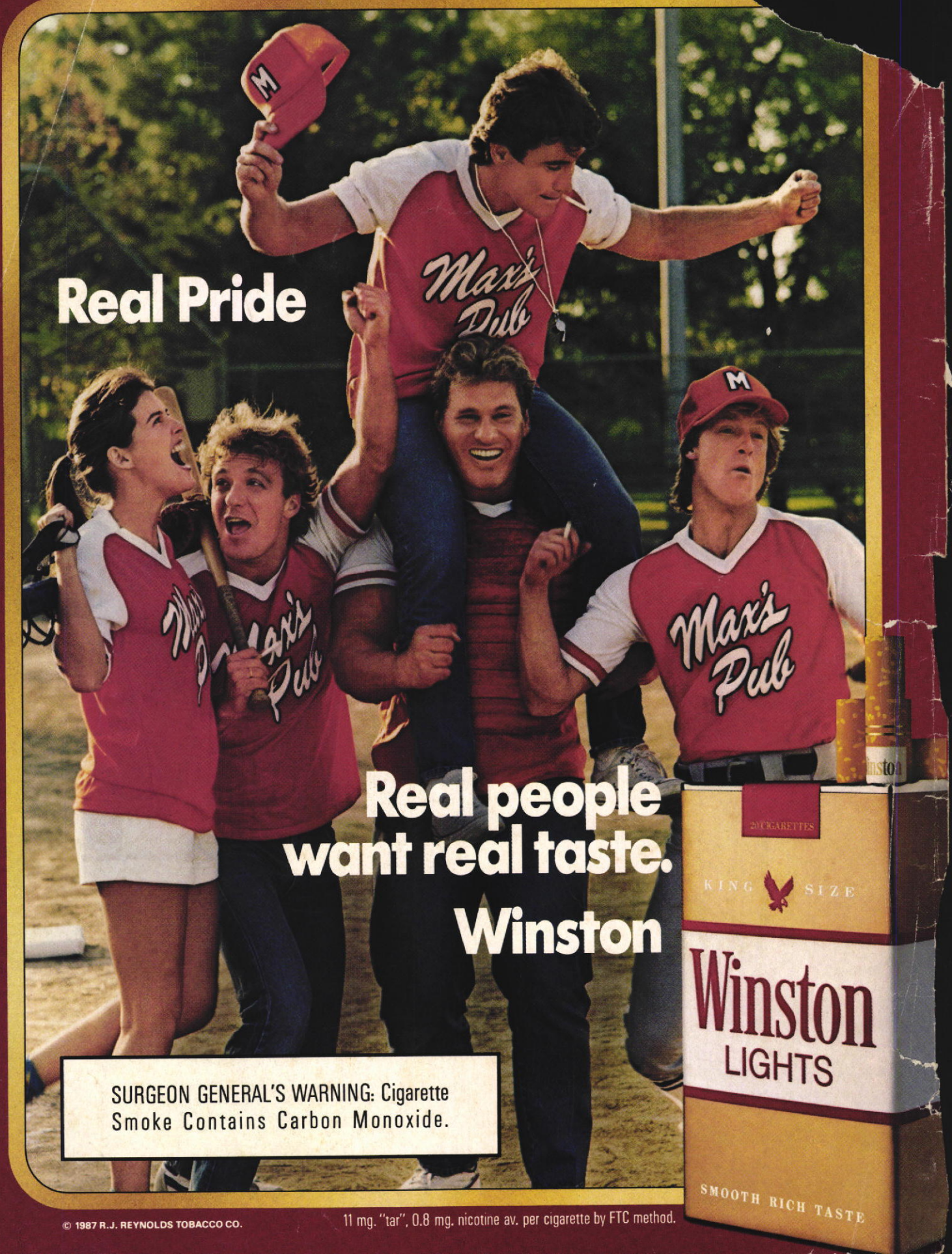

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